RELIGIOUS COURTSHIP:

BEING

HISTORICAL DISCOURSES

ON THE

Neceſſity of marrying RELIGIOUS HUSBANDS and WIVES only:

AS ALSO

Of Huſbands and Wives being of the SAME OPINIONS in RELIGION.

WITH

AN APPENDIX,

Of the

Neceſſity of taking none but RELIGIOUS SERVANTS;

and,

A Propoſal for the better managing of Servants.

THE ELEVENTH EDITION.

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PREFACE
TO THE
EIGHTH EDITION.

AS this way of writing, in caſes not much unlike this, has been approved of, and has met with great ſucceſs, in other hands; it has been an encouragement to this undertaking.

Hiſtorical dialogues, it muſt be confeſſed, have a very taking elegancy in them; and the ſtory being handed forward in ſhort periods, and quick returns, makes the retaining it in the mind the eaſier, and the impreſſion the more laſting as well as more delightful.

The ſtory repreſented here is capable of ſuch, and ſo many applications to the caſes of young people, whoſe ſettlement is always in view, that there will never be a time when the inſtruction will be uſeleſs.

If any body ſhould object, that too much is put here upon the woman's part, and that a lady cannot be ſuppoſed, in the midſt of her lover's addreſſes, to take upon her, to demand ſuch an account of himſelf as is here ſuggeſted; that few men will ſtoop to ſuch an examination, and few women venture the loſs of their lovers upon ſuch a ſubject; let ſuch conſider how ſmall the ſatisfaction here propoſed on the lady's part is, and that no gentle-

man can think it hard a woman ſhould be ſatisfied whether he is a Chriſtian or a heathen, a man of religion or an atheiſt; and indeed no man of any tolerable ſhare of ſenſe, will addreſs himſelf to a lady for marriage, but he will take care to anticipate her enquiries of that kind, by ſhewing ſome concern, for knowing what ſhe is herſelf.

The univerſal neglect of this trifle, both in men and women, is what this book is deſigned to correct; and there needs no greater ſatire upon that part, than the ſucceſs of the ſeveral caſes here related, *viz.* The happy life of the youngeſt ſiſter, who came into the meaſures propoſed; and the miſerable condition of the ſecond ſiſter, who raſhly threw herſelf into the arms of a man of different principles from her own, though bleſſed with all the good humour in the world.

In theſe accounts, the very great conſequence of being equally yoked, is illuſtrated; and it appears here how eſſential a ſhare of religion, and a harmony of principles in religion, are to the felicity of a conjugal life.

To thoſe who do not caſt off all concern for themſelves; who do not make marrying a mere leap in the dark, and, as the firſt lady expreſſes it, ruſhing like a horſe into the battle, theſe things will be of ſome moment. As to thoſe that are void of care of theſe matters, they muſt go on, and pay for their experience; let them take heed, and buy it as cheap as they can.

If the women ſeem to be favoured in this ſtory and have the better part of the ſtaff put into their hands, it is becauſe really the hazard is chiefly on

their ſide, and they are generally the greateſt ſufferers in the ſucceſs: but if it were otherwiſe, yet, if they are treated with more than ordinary regard, the author hopes they will not lay that ſin to his charge.

The appendix to this work ſpeaks for itſelf. Irreligious ſervants, in ſome reſpects, are the plague of families, and keep our houſes always in diſorder. It is a wonderful thing to reflect on, that ſo ſcandalous an evil, ſo eaſy to be rectified, ſhould have gone to ſuch a degree as it has in the world; and that maſters and miſtreſſes of families, have not long ago, for their own eaſe, and for the ſatisfaction of one another, come to a general law, for the managing, the puniſhing, and above all, for the recommending of ſervants; which if they would do, they would eaſily, I ſay, bring them to know themſelves, and do their duty; neither of which is the caſe among ſervants at this time.

But it is all our own faults; we recommend ſluts, and thieves, and drones, and ſaucy, inſolent fellows, and wenches: I ſay, we recommend them to one another, without any concern for our neighbour's ſafety or peace; in a word, to pay the debt of charity for thoſe creatures which have abuſed us, we forget the debt of juſtice to one another, and betray the confidence which one houſekeeper and neighbour owes to another, in one of the moſt eſſential articles of their families' quiet.

This is all expoſed here: and though this part is very ſhort, being but an accident to the other diſcourſes; yet, I preſume to ſay, it will be as acceptable, and in its kind, as uſeful as any of the reſt.

This eighth edition of this work, recommends itſelf upon this expreſs condition, *viz.* That the author has not found occaſion to alter any thing in the ſeventh, (errors of the preſs excepted), nor has he found room for any additions, that uſual pretence to ſet off new impreſſions, and impoſe upon thoſe who have bought the firſt; being ſtill fully ſatisfied, the goodneſs of the deſign, and the uſefulneſs of the ſubject, will make the work acceptable wherever it comes.

RE-

RELIGIOUS COURTSHIP.

PART I.

THERE lived in a village near London, an ancient grave gentleman, of a good eſtate which he had gained by trade, having been bred a merchant, though of a very good family too. He had been a man in great buſineſs; but his circumſtances being eaſy, and his love of a retired life increaſing with his years, he had left off his buſineſs, and had taken a houſe a mile or two out of town. He was a widower at the time of this affair, his wife having been dead ſome years before.

He had five or ſix children; and all grown up, but none ſettled in the world, though he had an eſtate ſufficient to give them very plentiful fortunes. His three daughters were very agreeable women; and, which was ſtill better, were very ſober, modeſt, ſenſible, and religious young ladies; two of them eſpecially. And as the character of their father, and the fortune he was able to give them, recommended them very well to the world; ſo they had ſeveral gentlemen that made honourable and handſome propoſals to their father for their marriage.

I ſhall moſt carefully avoid giving any room here, ſo much as to gueſs what opinion in religion they were bred up in, or whether the old gentleman was a churchman or a diſſenter; and the ſame caution I ſhall uſe with all the reſt of the perſons whom I ſhall bring upon the ſtage in the courſe of this ſtory: my reaſon for which every body will underſtand by the nature of the relation, and of the times we live in.

The father of these ladies had been a man always, till now, hurried in the world; being crowded with a vast business, taken up with getting money, and with growing rich; so that he neither had much concern for, or indeed took any care of the education or instruction of his children, but left them wholly to the conduct of their mother. Nor was it any great loss to the children, especially to the daughters; their mother being a most pious, religious, and virtuous lady, who was not only extraordinarily qualified to instruct her children, but gave up her whole time to it from their childhood.

One morning, a little before her death, calling her daughters to her, she told them among other things, That as to marriage, she had but two injunctions to lay upon them; which, as she was not likely to live to see them settled, she would desire them to lay down as maxims in the choice of their husbands; and which she would, as upon her death-bed, if her words had any extraordinary influence upon them, oblige them to observe strictly, *viz.*

1. *Never to marry any man, whatever his person or fortune might be, that did not, at least, profess to be a religious man.*

2. *Never to marry any man, how religious soever he may seem to be, if he was not of the same principles and opinion in religion as themselves.*

And as this was but a little before her death, so the daughters were more than ordinarily touched with the sense of it. How they did pursue it, and the consequences of it, will be seen in the following dialogues.

It followed some time after, that a gentleman of a very good estate courted the youngest of these daughters; and making very handsome proposals to her father, (for he offered to settle 600 l. *per annum* upon her), the father was exceedingly pleased with the match; he being a gentleman thoroughly

well bred, an agreeable perſon, and, in a word, nothing appearing to give the leaſt reaſon why he ſhould not be as acceptable to the lady as he was to the father.

He came thus recommended to the father, there appeared nothing diſagreeable in it to the young lady; nor had ſhe, at his firſt appearance, the leaſt exception to make againſt the gentleman as to his perſon. Indeed, as to his eſtate, though her father was very handſome, yet his was ſo far beyond it, that there was no compariſon in the caſe; and above all this, ſhe had this engaging circumſtance in the propoſal, *viz.* That ſhe being the youngeſt of the three daughters, the gentleman had paſſed over her two eldeſt ſiſters, and had fingled her out by his more particular fancy; giving her the undeniable mark of his affection, *viz.* That ſhe would be the wife of his choice, and conſequently that ſhe ſhould have an uncommon ſecurity for the ſincerity of his love to her.

The father oppoſed his propoſal a little at firſt, as a ſlight offered to his eldeſt daughters; but the gentleman told him, That he hoped, if he accepted his deſign of coming into his family, he would give him leave to take the perſon his judgement had made choice of, and that he thought he might be happy with: That it would be a very hard circumſtance to him, and what he could not think of with patience, to marry one of his daughters, and be in love with another; That he was very far from offering any ſlight to the eldeſt; letting him know, that happening to ſee the youngeſt firſt, he found ſuch ſuitableneſs, and ſomething ſo agreeable in her to him, that he reſolved to look no further: That, perhaps, if he had ſeen the eldeſt or the ſecond daughter firſt, it might have been the ſame thing; but that as he could not an-

swer for the bias of his fancy, so neither could he answer it to his own conscience, not to chuse her, that was, from the first moment he saw her, the only woman in the world that he ever thought could make him happy.

Her father could make no return to an answer that had so much weight in it, and which appeared to be so sincere; and therefore not acquainting his eldest daughter with the design he had to propose her to him, he took occasion to talk to them all together, one morning as they were drinking chocolate; and begins merrily with them thus.

DIALOGUE I.

Father. WELL, girls, you little think now, which of you all is like to be first married. What say you, child, (turning to the youngest), I hope you are content to let your eldest sisters go before you?

3d Daughter. Yes, yes, Sir; I desire both my sisters may go before me; for I see nothing in the world to make me in haste.

Fa. Why, what's the matter that you are so out of love with the world all on a sudden? Is it that you think yourself too good for every body, or every body too good for you?

3d Da. No, Sir; I am neither so vain to think the first, or so humble to think the last; but I desire to think of myself as I ought to think.

Fa. How is that, pray?

3d Da. Why, Sir, I think I live too well to change for the worse; and this is not an age to change for the better: and therefore I desire to be as I am.

Fa. Why, is this age so much worse than that that went before, pray?

3d Da. Nay, Sir, I don't know: but I am very

well ſatisfied, Sir, with your firſt propoſal, that my ſiſters may try before me.

Fa. Well, well; and if you go before your ſiſters, there will be no harm done, if it be to your liking, I hope. I dare ſay none of your ſiſters will be angry. At which the two eldeſt ſaid, No, no; we ſhall be very glad to ſee it. And ſo they fell to jeſting with their youngeſt ſiſter, till they almoſt angered her.

You are mighty difficult, ſays the eldeſt ſiſter, that you fall upon the whole world, as if there was nothing good enough for you.

Says the ſecond ſiſter, She will be as eaſily pleaſed as another, I warrant her, if ſhe was talked to in earneſt. Upon which, notwithſtanding their father was preſent, they fell to rallying one another between jeſt and earneſt, a little too warmly, as follows.

3d Da. That may be: as my eldeſt ſiſters teach me. I hope they intend to ſet me a good example; for is their turn firſt.

1ſt Da. We don't know that: if a good offer comes in your way, you'll hardly put it off, and for fay, Your betters muſt go before you.

2d Da. For all you are both my elder ſiſters, I queſtion whether you underſtand what a good offer means; and it may be have conſidered it no more than I. There's a great deal in that word.

1ſt Da. O! I'll explain it in a few words: A good eſtate, and a man you like.

3d Da. Nay, you might have ſtopt at the firſt: It no matter what the man is, if the eſtate be but good.

Fa. Is that the example my eldeſt ſiſters in- ſet me?

and a good example too, child.

ou are diſpoſed to jeſt, Sir; but I believe would not be pleaſed with ſuch a way of chuſing a huſband for any of your daughters.

2d Da. I hope my father would; I am ſure I ſhould.

2d Da. That's no token to me that you have conſidered much of the matter, as I ſaid before.

2d Da. Why, what would you have beſides a good eſtate? What matter is it what the man is? I would paſs by a great many homely defects for a good ſettlement.

3d Da. As for the homely defects, perhaps, I may be no nicer than you, if there was nothing elſe wanting.

2d Da. What can be wanting, if there be money enough?

3d Da. Nothing, I hope, when my ſiſter comes to chuſe.

2d Da. No; nor when you come to chuſe neither, it may be.

3d Da. I am afraid there will.

2d Da. For my part, I ſhall enquire for nothing elſe as I know of.

3d Da. No! What! would you have your huſband have no religion?

2d Da. What have I to do with his religion? He'll be a Chriſtian, I hope.

3d Da. And what if he ſhould not?

2d Da. Nay, then he may be a heathen if he will, what's that to me?

3d Da. That's a proof of what I ſaid before, that you have not conſidered much of the matter.

2d Da. No, indeed, not I; but I ſuppoſe my younger ſiſter has.

3d Da. Your younger ſiſter never told you ſo yet. But, methinks, there requires very little conſideration, to ſay, if I ever ſhould marry, I would not have a rake, a heathen, a profligate fellow, a man without religion, purely for his money. If you think theſe things no objections, and are got over ſuch ſcruples in the caſe, I muſt tell you, ſiſter, that it ſeems the

buſineſs has been more in your head than in mine, or at leaſt to worſe purpoſe.

2*d. Da.* Well, it may be ſo; and then it may follow, that when you have conſidered more of it too, you will be of my mind.

3*d Da.* What, to marry an Atheiſt! a man of no principles! that knows neither God nor devil!

2*d Da.* Ay, ay, that or any thing elſe, if you have but a good ſettlement, child. A good ſettlement will make up all theſe things: you take him, I warrant you.

3*d Da.* No, ſiſter; not for all I can ſee with my eyes.

2*d Da.* O, you don't know your own mind, till you come to be tried; we ſhall ſee you tell another tale hereafter.

3*d Da.* I an't ſo fond of a huſband, whatever my ſiſter is.

[Here the father ſeeing that the younger ſiſter began to be a little moved, and unwilling they ſhould make a quarrel of it, put an end to the diſcourſe, and ſo they ſoon after withdrew; and then the father being left with the eldeſt daughter only, went on with his diſcourſe thus to her.]

Fa. Child, you are a little two hard upon your ſiſter.

Da. She ſhould not have taken it ſo, Sir; ſhe knows it is but in jeſt.

Fa. But you do not know whether it may be all in jeſt or no.

Da. Nay, Sir, I am ſure all our ſhare in it was in jeſt; if there is any thing in it, I ſhould have talked in another way.

[Here ſhe was very inquiſitive with her father to know if there was any thing in it or not; at which he only ſmiled.]

Da. Nay, Sir, then I underſtand how it is.

Fa. Well, child; how will you take it, to ſee your youngeſt ſiſter married before you?

Da. O very well, Sir, I ſhall be very glad of it, if it be for her good. But if I were to ſpeak my mind, I ſhould ſay ſomething to it about her, that it may be there may be occaſion for.

Fa. Well, pray ſpeak your mind then.

Da. Why, Sir, for all my ſiſter's bantering her, I muſt own our youngeſt ſiſter will not be eaſily pleaſed in a huſband, as times go now.

Fa. How do you mean, child?

Da. Why, Sir, I mean, that though ſhe may be the firſt of us that ſhall be aſked, ſhe may be the laſt of us that will be married.

Fa. Ay, my girl! is it ſo with you then? What! have you been both making your bargains without me? and are they ſo near concluding? That's very hard.

Da. Dear father, how could you have ſuch a thought of us? You are quite wrong; you don't underſtand me at all.

Fa. Nay, how can I underſtand you any other way? If it is not ſo, explain yourſelf.

Da. Sir, I mean that my ſiſter will not be eaſily pleaſed. She will ſcarce take the firſt that comes, I dare ſay.

Fa. No? then I ſhall take it very ill: for I aſſure you he that I mean is a very good one.

Da. Nay, if he is a good one, it may be ſhe may; but it is a queſtion, Sir, whether her good one, and your good one, may be both of a ſort.

Fa. Why, he has a very good eſtate, I'll aſſure you; far beyond what ſhe can expect.

Da. That's a good thing; but that will go but a little way with her, I know.

Fa. Well, he is a very handſome, well accompliſh-

ed, well-bred gentleman. She cannot miſlike him. He is a moſt agreeable young gentleman, I aſſure you.

Da. That won't go a bit the farther with her, neither, I am ſure.

Fa. Then he is in love with her, and has ſingled her out from you all. She will be the wife of his affection, to be ſure. What can ſhe deſire more?

Da. She will deſire ſomething more ſtill, Sir; tho' laſt is a thing will go very far; doubtleſs further than any thing we have talked on yet. But you know, Sir, my ſiſter, is a very ſober, religious body, and ſhe will never marry any man that is not ſo too; though his eſtate, his perſon, his accompliſhments, were beyond all the reſt of the world. And this was the reaſon why I ſaid ſhe may be firſt aſked and laſt married.

Fa. Nay, I can't tell how matters are as to that.

Da. I'll aſſure you, Sir, ſhe will know how it is as to that, before ſhe engages.

Fa. Nay, let her alone to that part, that's none of my buſineſs.

[Here he was touched a little, and reflected back upon to himſelf; O! why do I ſay it is none of my buſineſs? Whoſe buſineſs is it, if it is not mine?]

Da. But, Sir, when you know her mind in that may prevent your receiving any diſappointment, and prevent her venturing to diſoblige you, in offering what you may propoſe to her.

Fa. Why, no; I dare ſay ſhe won't refuſe him; ſhe is not ſuch a fool neither.

Da. Dear Sir, then I hope you know he is a ſober religious gentleman.

Fa. I know nothing to the contrary, my dear; I ſuppoſe he is.

Da. But, Sir, it makes me anxious about it, becauſe you ſaid juſt now, you could not tell. I hope

you will inquire farther into it before you take any farther ſteps about it.

Fa. Why, child, as to that, I dare ſay, ſhe need not be concerned. He is ſo good a humoured man, he will never croſs her in ſmall matters, eſpecially in religious things. Child, do you think any gentleman can be angry, that his wife is ſober and religious? To be ſure, ſhe may be as religious as ſhe will.

Da. O dear Sir, my ſiſter can never be ſatisfied ſo, ſure.

[He obſerves his daughter concerned at it, and that tears ſtood in her eyes.]

Fa. Child, what's the matter? What makes you ſo concerned about it?

Da. It is a ſad life, Sir, for a woman to have no help from her huſband in things that are good, but only to have liberty for herſelf to be as good as ſhe will, or rather as good as ſhe can. By the ſame rule, ſhe may be as bad as ſhe will; and it may be, he will like her ne'er the better for one, nor the worſe for t'other.

Fa. Well, he is a fine gentleman, and profeſſes a great affection for her.

Da. Before he has ſeen her, it may be, or knows any thing of her.

Fa. No, no, he has ſeen her; but he has never been in her company I know.

Da. So that I find he cares not what ſhe is; he chuſes by her outſide only.

Fa. He takes all the reſt upon truſt.

Da. But my ſiſter won't take him ſo, I can tell him that.

Fa. I ſhall take it very ill from her if ſhe ſlights him; for I aſſure you he is not to be ſlighted, he has very near 2000 l. a-year eſtate.

Da. But I am ſure, if he is not a religious man,

ſhe will ſlight him for all that; my meaning is, ſhe will never have him; I ſuppoſe ſhe will not be rude to him.

Fa. If ſhe does refuſe him, ſhe and I ſhall quarrel, I aſſure you, and that very much.

Da. I hope you won't, Sir: you will give her leave to chuſe to her own liking. It is for her life, and ſhe muſt bear the diſcomfort of it; no body can bear it for her. Beſides, Sir, you know ſhe was very religiouſly inſtructed by my mother.

Fa. Ay, ay; your mother was a good woman.

Da. And you know, Sir, I ſuppoſe, what advice my mother gave her upon her death-bed, *viz.* "Ne-"ver to marry a man that was not religious, what-"ever other advantages might offer with him."

Fa. And did ſhe not give you the ſame advice too, my dear?

Da. Yes, to be ſure, and all of us.

Fa. Well; and yet you heard what your ſiſter ſaid juſt now, *viz.* That ſhe would not trouble her-ſelf about it, ſo there was but a good eſtate.

Da. But I hope my ſiſter would conſider better, ſhe came to the queſtion.

Fa. Why, child, would you refuſe ſuch a gentle-, and ſuch a ſettlement as this is, that offers now our ſiſter, for ſuch a nicety as that?

Da. It will be time enough, Sir, for me to an- that queſtion, when I am offered ſuch a one; 's no danger of me yet.

I hope you would be wiſer.

I hope, Sir, I ſhould act as becomes me. he caſe is not mine now; if it was, I ould not have begun the diſcourſe.

Fa. Well, but did your mother give you ſuch ad-vice, child, when ſhe was ill?

Da. Yes, Sir; and more than advice: for ſhe told us, ſhe would leave it as an injunction upon us,

as far as her dying words could have any influence to oblige us.

Fa. Very well; that is as much as to ſay, ſhe had found the inconvenience of it herſelf.

[Here his conſcience touched him again, though but ſlightly, and he fetched a ſigh, and ſaid ſoftly, If ſhe did, it was nothing but what ſhe had too much reaſon to do; for ſhe lived but an uncomfortable life with me on that very account.]

Da. Nay, indeed, dear father, we never put any ſuch conſtruction upon it.

Fa. And ſo, my dear, you think your ſiſter will not like this gentleman, do you?

Da. Indeed, Sir, I cannot tell, till I know what kind of gentleman he is; no, nor then neither. For how can I tell what my ſiſter will like, or how her fancy may lead her to act againſt her judgment, if ſhe ſhould like him very well upon ſeeing him?

Fa. But you believe ſhe won't?

Da. If he is not a very ſober religious man, I do think ſhe won't. If ſhe does, ſhe muſt break in upon the moſt ſolemn reſolution that ſhe is able to make.

Fa. Why, will nothing ſerve her but a ſaint? Alas, where does ſhe think to find him? What! would ſhe marry a biſhop?

Da. Nay, Sir, if ſhe ſhould, ſhe is not ſure ſhe ſhould not be diſappointed. Miniſters are but men.

Fa. No, indeed, child; nor always the beſt of men neither.

Da. But, Sir, where there is a profeſſion of religion, there is ſome likelihood of finding the truth of it; but where there is no profeſſion, there it cannot be. Now, tho' we are not obliged, to be ſure, our huſbands ſhould be ſaints, yet I believe we ought to be ſatisfied that they are not Athieſts. There's

a great deal of difference, Sir, between a friend to religion, and an enemy.

Fa. Well, well; the girls of this age do not much trouble themſelves about religion. They generally let it alone, till they ſee what religion their huſbands are of.

Da. Dear father, I hope your girls are not of that ſort.

Fa. My daughters are like other folks daughters, believe. I hope they are not worſe.

Da. But, Sir, if that were true, then there would be the more reaſon to take care that they ſhould ry religious huſbands, elſe they would have no ion at all.

Fa. But how ſhall you know it?

Da. We muſt endeavour to be ſatisfied as well can. If we are deceived, it may be our unneſs, but will not be our fault; but if we neglect caution, it may be a double miſery, by its being rrow, and our ſin too.

Fa. Well, child, I hope this gentleman will pleaſe er as well as he does me; and I would not ner ſtand in her own light. If he is not ſo s now, it may come afterwards. The man er, well-bred, ingenious gentleman.

Da. I can ſay nothing to it, Sir, unleſs I knew only take notice of the principle, Sir, on my ſiſter goes; and by which I am ſure ſhe in this matter, that you may not be diſapand reſent it: for I know ſhe will not go

Fa. I'll warrant you. I intend to talk with her ab don't doubt but ſhe will like him very well.

[Two or three days after this diſcourſe, the father brings home this young gentleman to dinner; and after dinner he takes occaſion to talk with his daughter, and to tell her, that this was the gentleman

that he had told her of, that intended to court her; and that he expected she would think of the thing, and receive him as her own inclinations and his merit should direct.

The gentleman did not discourse much with her by herself that time, having no design to begin closely at the first interview. However, he had the opportunity of walking two or three turns with her in a green walk in the garden; and when he took his leave, told her, he resolved to wait on her again; to which she made him no answer for that time.

The next evening he came again; and after that for several evenings together: when having made her acquainted with his design, and laid close siege to her for some time, she found nothing to object against him; for he was indeed a most agreeable person; and her father pressing her to it on the other hand, and letting her know what honourable proposals he had made her, and how he had singled her out from all her sisters, as the object of his choice, she began insensibly to find her affections very strongly biassed in his favour.

All this while she could make no discovery of any thing about religion in him; nor so much, as whether he was well inclined, or perfectly destitute. The respect he shewed her, and the distance she kept him at, permitted him not to use any loose expressions, that might give her any light into his principles; and, as he afterwards confessed, he found her so nice in things of that kind, that the least dislocated word would have given her an offence; and therefore he kept upon his guard a great while, till at length, when they became more intimate, he abated his usual caution.

By this time, as she confessed to her sister, she did

not only like him, but really loved him; and having nothing to object againſt him, had given him reaſon to ſee, that ſhe deſigned to have him. But ſhe was under a great concern how to know what he was as to religion; and terribly afraid leſt ſhe ſhould give her affections ſuch a looſe, that though ſhe ſhould be deceived in the main point, ſhe ſhould not be able to maſter herſelf, ſo much as to go back. As ſhe was muſing very ſeriouſly upon this, one morning in her chamber, her eldeſt ſiſter came in to her, and held the following diſcourſe with her.]

Eld. Si. Siſter! how ſtands the world with you now?

Yo. Si. Never worſe, ſiſter. If you do not help me, I am undone.

Eld. Si. What's the matter?

Yo. Si. Why, if I have this man, I ſhall be the miſerableſt creature alive.

Eld. Si. How ſo?

Yo. Si. O! there's nothing of religion in him.

Eld. Si. Are you ſure there is not?

Yo. Si. No, I am not ſure; but we have converſed this month now, and I never heard one word of it come out of his mouth. And if I ſpeak a word, he turns it off, and does it ſo cleverly, that I cannot put in another word for my life.

Eld. Si. I warrant you, I would find it out if it were the caſe.

Yo. Si. You could not, I am ſure.

Eld. Si. Why, I would aſk him point blank, what religion he was of?

Yo. Si. Why, ſo I did, and he laughed at me, and ſaid, O child, I am a mighty good Chriſtian.

Eld. Si. I ſhould have told him, I was afraid he wan't.

Yo. Si. Why, I did that too, in the very words,

and ſtill he put me off. Another time I aſked him, if he was not a Papiſt? Immediately he fell a-croſſing himſelf all over; and made himſelf, and me too, ſo merry at it, that though I was really troubled about it, I could not for my life get the leaſt ſerious thing out of him.

Eld. Si. Why, you muſt let it go on a little farther, till you are more intimate; and till you come to talk of your way of living, the affairs of his family and houſe, and the like.

Yo. Si Really, ſiſter, I am afraid to go on any farther; for, I muſt confeſs, I begin to have a ſtrange kindneſs for him: And if I go any farther, I may love him better, till my affection may be a ſnare to me, and I may be prevailed with to take him, without farther inquiry, which I ſhall have no peace in.

Eld. Si. What will you do then?

Yo. Si. I know not what to do. I wiſh you would try what you can make of him. You are free enough with him to talk any thing of that kind, ſure.

Eld. Si. I can be free enough; but that won't do it. If he is too cunning for you, he will eaſily be too cunning for me.

Yo. Si. Why, do you think then that it is a diſguiſe?

Eld. Si. What elſe can it be? Do you think he guards himſelf ſo ſtrictly againſt all your attempts for nothing?

Yo. Si. If I thought ſo, I ſhould inquire no farther; it would be a plain diſcovery to me.

Eld. Si. Why ſo?

Yo. Si. Why, if he was a ſerious religious perſon, he would have no reaſon or occaſion to conceal it. If he endeavonrs to hide himſelf, it is for ſomething that he would not have known; and then I need not aſk any more after it,

Eld. Si. No doubt of it; you cannot think any other.

Yo. Si. But indeed I do think otherwiſe: I verily believe it is all mere nature, and nothing but the height of good humour; for I have never put the queſtion downright to him, but in a kind of jeſting way.

Eld. Si. But why don't you then? Why do you trifle and dally ſo long with a thing of ſuch conſequence? You an't afraid of diſobliging him, are you?

Yo. Si. No, indeed; I am more afraid that his anſwer will diſoblige me.

Eld. Si. Well, well; you had better have it diſ-ſed now than hereafter. I would not be back-ſpeak plain to him.

Yo. Si. If I talk never ſo plain, he will not give anſwer. He is ſo merry, I cannot bring alk. I beg you will ſee if you can break in

Eld. Si. Come, I'll tell you what I will do, ill be better a great deal than my talking by myſelf. You know we ſhall walk all a while after ſupper; I'll begin it before d you may ſpeak or not ſpeak, take it in jeſt earneſt, as you find it proper.

Yo. Si. Do then; I think that will be very well.

The next evening the two ſiſters and this young man walking in the garden, as was uſual after and talking of ſeveral indifferent things, a ant brings the eldeſt ſiſter a letter, which made little ſtop in their walk. She opened it, and it; and he finding her colour change a little reading, ſtept up to her; ſays he, What's the er, ſiſter? (for he always called her ſiſter), you no bad news, I hope? Truly, ſays ſhe, one way

it is no bad news, and another way it is. And turning to her ſiſter, ſhe ſays, Sir James is dead. He was a little concerned to hear ſome of the family was dead, leſt it ſhould grieve his miſtreſs. But ſhe, without any appearance of trouble, returned, Well, ſince it is the diſpoſal of Providence, I am not grieved; for my aunt is delivered from one of the worſt good huſbands, that ever a ſober woman had. He took hold of that word preſently, and ſtill directing his ſpeech to her ſiſter, ſaid, Worſt good huſband! what a myſtery is that? Why truly, ſays the ſiſter, the thing is too true. Sir James was a very good huſband in his humour, and in ſeveral other things: but my Lady had a dreadful life with him. Why, ſays he, that may be very true; a man may be a very good huſband in one thing, and be very unkind in another; it is owing much to the diſagreement of tempers. The young lady's ſiſter was diſappointed in his anſwer; for ſhe expected he would have inquired into the particulars; but he put it off, as a thing that did not concern him much. At which the younger ſiſter looked at her, and ſmiled, which was as much as to tell her, that ſhe had found now, that what ſhe had told her was true; *viz.* that ſhe would not ſee it eaſy to break in upon him. She took the hint, and reſolved to try the beſt of her ſkill, and found it ſoon anſwered her end: ſo ſhe returned to him very ſmartly, No, no, Sir, ſays ſhe, it was not from a diſagreement of tempers in this caſe; it is much worſe; it was diſagreement of principles; for the gentleman was of a very good temper, I aſſure you. Then if he had a good wife, returns he, he ſhould have made it his firſt principle to be obliging and good tempered to his wife. Alas! ſays the lady, he had no religion, and ſhe is the moſt pious religious lady in the world. It may be then, ſays he, ſhe had enough for her and her huſband too.

Her being religious, ſaid ſhe, made his want of it an inſufferable burden to her. Then ſhe was to blame, ſays he; for what need ſhe have been uneaſy at that? Not uneaſy! ſays ſhe. How is it poſſible a religious woman can live comfortably with an irreligious profane huſband! O, very well, ſays he again. What ſignifies it to a woman, whether her huſband have any religion or no? I have better thoughts of you, ſays ſhe, than to believe you ſpeak as you think, or that you would be underſtood ſo.

Her ſiſter had liſtened very attentively to all this, and was ſenſibly affected with it; but ſaid nothing till now, when ſhe turned upon her ſiſter: Why, ſiſter, ſaid ſhe, ſhould you think ſo? I hope Mr —— ſays nothing but what he is very ſincere in. Do you think he has not his religion to chuſe as well as other young gentlemen? Madam, ſays he, how ſhould I chuſe my religion, that have not choſen a wife? Then you are for chuſing you a wife firſt, ſays his miſtreſs, and your religion afterwards? Why, Madam, ſays he, don't all the gentlemen in England do ſo too? I don't know what they do, ſays ſhe, but I know what they ought to do.

She was now too well ſatisfied of what ſhe feared before, and her mind was ſo oppreſs'd with it, that ſhe was not able to hold; but making an excuſe to take her ſiſter's letter, and go in and tell her father the news of the death of his brother-in-law, ſhe left her ſiſter to walk with her lover, and went up into her chamber, and locking herſelf in, ſhe gave vent to her paſſions, by crying vehemently a great while. When ſhe had recovered herſelf, and conſidered that ſhe was obliged in civility to go down again, ſhe compoſed her thoughts, and kneeling down, prayed to God to fortify her ſoul in the reſolution ſhe had always taken, never to join herſelf to any man that did not acknowledge God, and profeſs to fear and

ſerve him; and, in this temper, ſhe went down to him again.

She was with him after that ſome hours in the evening, as uſual; but he obſerved ſhe was not eaſy nor free: at length ſhe told him, that upon this occaſion of a relation being dead, it was proper for the family, and decent to their father, that they ſhould make ſome little alteration in their conduct, and deſired he would not take it ill, that ſhe retired from him ſooner than ſhe uſed to do. This he could not object againſt; and accordingly took his leave, believing that her uneaſineſs was nothing but the buſineſs of her annt's being a widow; which, though, as ſhe ſaid, ſhe was not much concerned for, yet ſeveral things about it might take up her thoughts, ſo as to make her not ſo perfectly eaſy, or ſo good company as ſhe was before.

But he was quite out in his gueſs; for her uneaſineſs was of another kind, and ſhe had nothing now lay upon her mind, but how ſhe ſhould diſcharge herſelf entirely of his importunities, and yet without being rude and uncivil to him, and without diſobliging her father; for ſhe was firmly reſolved in her mind never to ſee him more.

When ſhe had thus taken her leave of him, ſhe went up into her chamber, ſending her maid to deſire her ſiſter to come up; and ordering the ſervant to excuſe her to her father for not coming to ſupper, for ſhe was indiſpoſed.

As ſoon as her ſiſter came into her chamber, ſhe ran to her in the greateſt paſſion maginable, and throwing her arms about her neck, O ſiſter, ſays ſhe, help me but out of this wretched buſineſs, and I'll never come into the like as long as I live. She ſaid no more, but hung about her, crying violently a great while.]

Si. What can I do for you, child? You know I'll do any thing I can.

Yo. Si. Don't you ſee how it is now? Was I not right in my ſuſpicion?

Si. I am afraid you are: I don't know what to ſay to it.

Yo. Si. Say to it! I would not marry him if he was Lord High Treaſurer of Britain.

Si. What will you do then? How will you put him off?

Yo. Si. Put him off! let him put himſelf off, an' he will; I have no more to ſay to him.

Si. Nay, you muſt have more to ſay to him, you muſt tell him ſo.

Yo. Si. Not I; I'll never ſee him more.

Si. Child, you muſt not be rude to him: you don't want manners.

Yo. Si. I would not be rude to him, that's it I want your help for.

Si. What can I do in it? I cannot go down to him, when he comes, and tell him you will ſee him no more. You cannot deſire me to carry ſuch a meſſage.

Yo Si. No, that's true, I can't; I know not what to do, not I.

Si. Shall I ſpeak to my father to do it.

Yo. Si. I think my father is the fitteſt to give him his anſwer. He brought him firſt on, and I think he ſhould put him off.

Si. But he will be in ſuch a rage, I hardly dare ſpeak of it to him.

Yo. Si Dear ſiſter, he won't be angry with you, his anger will be all at me.

Si. You know, ſiſter, my father's infirmity, that if he is angry with any body, he is angry with every body; I know he'll uſe me very ill if I break it to him.

Yo. Si. What ſhall I do then? I'll be gone, if I never come home again, while I live.

Si. No, no, you ſhan't be gone; whither will you go?

Yo. Si. I beg of you, ſiſter, ſpeak to my father about it.

Si. What ſhall I ſay if he calls for you? will you come down?

Yo. Si. If I muſt, I will; but keep it off if you can.

[The eldeſt daughter goes down to her father, a little before ſupper; and as ſoon as he ſaw her, he began the diſcourſe.]

Fa. Child, what's the matter with your ſiſter? Her maid tells me ſhe is not well: Have you ſeen her?

Da. Yes, Sir; I came juſt from her; ſhe is not very well.

Fa. What ails her? She muſt not be ſick now, whatever ſhe does. Why, it is ominous to be ſick when ſhe is a-wooing.

Da. I believe ſhe is ſicker of that than of any thing elſe, Sir; if ſhe was delivered from her gentleman, ſhe would be well enough.

Fa. What do you mean! why, I intend they ſhall be married the week after next. The writings are a-drawing, and I deſigned by and by to have given her a hundred pounds towards buying her wedding-clothes.

Da. You may adjourn that a while, Sir; ſhe has chang'd her mind.

Fa. Chang'd her mind! what do you mean?

[The father riſes up in a great paſſion, and walks about the room.]

Da. Dear father, do not be angry with me; it is no buſineſs of mine. I had rather ſay no more of it, for I ſee it will put you in a paſſion. But why ſhould you be in a paſſion with me?

Fa. Not in a paſſion! who can but be in a paſſion

with all of you? Chang'd her mind, ſay you! Ay, and I'll change my mind too. I'll never give her a groat; no, not a ſhilling, to any other man; that I'll promiſe her.

Da. I dare ſay, Sir, ſhe has no other man in her view.

Fa. What does ſhe mean then! Is ſhe mad! to ruin herſelf thus, and ſtand in her own light? Does ſhe ever expect to have ſuch another offer?

Da. No, I believe not, Sir; nor does ſhe deſire it.

Fa. No, nor ever ſhall. I'll marry again, as old as I am, and give away what I have to ſtrangers, before I'll give it to children that ſhall treat me thus.

Da. Will you puniſh, Sir, the innocent with the guilty?

Fa. Why, you are all guilty, for aught I know; what do you come with ſuch a ſtory for? Where is ſhe? call her down.

Da. Sir, ſhe is very much indiſpoſed. If you would pleaſe to let her alone till to-morrow, ſhe may be better able to ſpeak for herſelf, and you may not be ſo much in a paſſion with her.

Fa. Well, let her alone till morning then; I ſuppoſe ſhe'll change her mind again by that time.

Da. I am ſorry, Sir, to ſee you take it ſo ill of her; but I dare ſay ſhe will be the ſame to-morrow, and as long as ſhe lives.

Fa. Well, then I'll be of the ſame mind too to-morrow.

[The eldeſt ſiſter went up, after ſupper, to her ſiſter's chamber, who waited for her, impatient enough. As ſoon as ſhe came, ſhe gave her ſiſter an account of what diſcourſe ſhe had hadwith her father, and how angry he was; which, though it terrified and afflicted her very much, yet it did not move her at all to alter her reſolutions; and ſhe en-

deavoured, as well as ſhe could, to furniſh herſelf with anſwers to give her father when he ſhould begin with her. But whether it was, that her father was impatient to hear what ſhe had to ſay, or that ſhe believing he would not meddle with it till morning, came unwarily in his way, is not material; but happening to ſee her the ſame night, he called her in to him, and told her he wanted to ſpeak with her.

He began very mildly with her, which a little encouraged her; for ſhe was ſomething ſurpriſed at his beginning to talk, before ſhe expected it; and taking her by the arm, feels for her pulſe. What's the matter with you, child? ſays her father; they told me you wan't well; I think your pulſe beats very true.]

Da. I am better, Sir, now: but I was very much out of order.

Fa. Only a little in love, my dear; that's all, I hope.

Da. No indeed, Sir, the contrary to an extreme, as I ſuppoſe my ſiſter has told you.

Fa. Your ſiſter, child! I can lay no ſtreſs on any thing ſhe ſaid: I cannot tell whether ſhe was in jeſt or in earneſt.

Da. Sir, I am very ſorry that what ſhe ſaid is diſobliging, and more, that it ſhould put you into a paſſion: I hope, when you conſider of it, you will be of the ſame mind with me.

Fa. What do you mean, child, by the ſame mind? I have recommended a gentleman to you, whom you can have no objection againſt, and his eſtate is double to what you can expect: You told me yourſelf that you had no objection againſt his perſon, and he has made you his choice, and is in love with you above all your ſiſters; what can you deſire more?

Da. All that you ſay, Sir, is true; and for his perſon and eſtate, they are both better than I ought to expect. But—

Fa. But what? Prithee, child, don't bring any of

your canting ſcruples to me, I'll hear none of your buts—

Da. It was my fear that you would be in a paſſion, Sir, and would not hear me. [*She cries.*

Fa. What father can bear to be ſo treated, and not be in a paſſion? What would you have me hear?

Da. Sir, I would have you hear the reaſons why I cannot comply.

Fa. It is enough to me to hear you cannot. The reaſons I have for the match are good. You acknowledge the gentleman is agreeable; you cannot ſay that you cannot love him, and I am ſure then you cannot give a good reaſon againſt it; and therefore I expect you go on with it: I have appointed the week after next for your wedding; and here, here's ſome money to buy you clothes.

[*Holds out a bank-bill to her.*

Da. Sir, I beg you will not take it ill that I cannot do it. [*She pulls back her hand from the bill.*

Fa. What do you mean? I adviſe you not to play the fool with me any longer.

[Here the father being in a great paſſion, her mother, who was in pain for her, hearing him loud, came in, which greatly encouraged her; and ſhe ſpoke, though very reſpectfully, to her father, yet with great plainneſs.]

Da. Sir, this ſeems to be a hardſhip that never was put upon any one before. If I was going to marry one you did not like, it was no doubt in your power to command me not to do it; but I cannot think you ought to command me to marry any man againſt my will.

Fa. I have a great many reaſons, why I ought to expect your compliance in this; and you know my reaſons are good.

Da. You cannot then but think, Sir, that I have

ſome reaſons againſt it, or I ſhould comply with my father; for I never diſobey'd you before; and why ſhould not my reaſons be heard?

Fa. I know you can have no reaſons that are ſufficient.

Da. Will you pleaſe to let any one elſe be judge of that for me?

Fa. I'll have no arbitrators between me and my children.

Da. I cannot help myſelf in that.

Fa. My diſpute with you is ſhort: Will you have this gentleman, or no?

Da. If it was not to my father, I ſhould give a different anſwer: but I deſire to ſay nothing that may diſpleaſe you.

Fa. I can't be diſpleaſed with words ſo much as I am by actions. The gentleman has made his way through every thing, made propoſals too great for any father to refuſe: You have entertained him, ſhewed him a great deal of reſpect, and now to treat him thus, and your father thus, it is intolerable.

Da. When the gentleman and you treated of this matter, it was without me; I had no knowledge of it; neither was it my part to be concerned.

Fa. Well, I know that.

Da. After you were agreed, you bring him to me; I ſuppoſe this to be that I might converſe with him, and ſee if I liked to make him my choice: If this was not the caſe, you might as well, by your command, have ordered me to marry him the firſt day as now.

Fa. Well, what do you make of all this?

Da. Upon frequent viſits made me, I found nothing diſagreeable in him, and ſhewed him as much reſpect as was my part. I hope I have not ſhewed him more than became me.

Fa. Yes, truly, if you reſolve not to have him.

Da. Let him reproach me with that if he can.

Fa. Why ſhould you have entertained him at all, if you reſolved not to have him?

Da. I did not for ſome time reſolve not to have him, till I diſcovered him farther; and it was your command that put me firſt upon the trial, and my reaſons againſt it now are good, if you pleaſe to hear them patiently: but I'll rather bear all you pleaſe to lay on me, than put you into a paſſion at me.

Fa. I deſire no reaſons nor no diſcourſe; anſwer me the queſtion in ſhort, Whether you will have him or no? It will raiſe my paſſion leſs than your impertinent reaſons.

Da. If it muſt be ſo, Sir, without hearing any reaſons, then my anſwer is, No, never while I live; and I leave my reaſons for it to him that judges righteous judgment.

Fa. Then from this time forward you are no relation of mine, any more than my cookmaid.

[The young lady was too full to ſay any more, and went out of the room while he was ſpeaking.]

Eld. Da. Dear father, do not ſay ſo.

Fa. Nay, it is no matter whether ſhe heard me or no; I'll keep my promiſe with her.

Eld. Da. I hope you won't, Sir; it may be my ſiſter may be better adviſed, or you may be farther ſatisfied of her reaſons.

Fa. I know her reaſons well enough. He is not hypocrite enough for her, I ſuppoſe; if a fawning ſmooth-tongued fellow would come and talk ſcripture to her, ſhe would take him preſently. She does not know what religion is.

Eld. Da. Sir, if that were true, ſhe would have ſtronger reaſons for deſiring a religious huſband, than ſhe may have now; that ſhe might have a kind

inſtructor to aſſiſt her. We have all need of helps that way at leaſt. We need no profane huſbands to keep us back; a looſe irreligious huſband is a dreadful ſnare.

[This was a night of paſſion, and little was done all the evening by the father but to make work for repentance. He was ſo provoked at his daughter, that he made terrible reſolutions againſt her, that he would never give her a farthing; that he would turn her out of doors; that ſhe ſhould go to ſervice; that he would make his will, and whatever he left to the reſt of his children, it ſhould be upon condition, that they ſhould never relieve her, nor own her, nor call her ſiſter, and that if they did, what they had ſhould go to his eldeſt ſon, and the like.

He was ſo diſturbed, that he got but little ſleep all night; and in the morning he was obliged to go out of town early to his ſiſter's, about forty miles off, whoſe huſband was juſt dead; ſo that he did not ſee his youngeſt daughter any more before he went: but juſt as he was ſtepping into his chariot, he called his eldeſt daughter to him: What, ſays he, child, is to be done in this affair while I am gone? She won't be ſo rude to turn him off while I am away, will ſhe? Indeed, Sir, ſays the daughter, I am perplexed about it; I know not how it will be managed; but I believe ſhe will ſee him no more. Not ſee him! ſays the father; that is the unmannerlieſt thing in the world: ſure ſhe won't be ſo rude to him; ſhe might give me the opportunity to put an end to it handſomely. Pray tell her, I expect it, and I aſſure you, if ſhe refuſes to ſee him till my return, I'll never ſee her more as long as I live.

In this temper the father went away: the eldeſt daughter, poor lady, had her heart full with ſuch a meſſage, and ſcarce knew how to deliver it: how-

ever, upon talking farther with her ſiſter the ſame morning, and finding her inflexible, and perhaps more ſtiff than ſhe thought ſhe needed to be, ſhe did at laſt deliver it. Their dialogue was ſhort, but effectual, as follows:]

Eld. Si. Dear ſiſter, what will you do in this matter? My father is gone.

Yo. Si. What can I do? I think my father is very unkind to me.

Eld. Si. My father is paſſionate, you know.

Yo. Si. But not to hear me, not to aſk my reaſons, this is very hard! Do any fathers marry their daughters by force?

Eld Si. Why, I'll tell you what my father ſays to that; he ſays he knows your reaſons beforehand, and he thinks them of no weight.

Yo. Si. Dear ſiſter, do you think them of no moment?

Eld. Si. 'Tis hard for a daughter to make herſelf judge between her father and the reſt of his children: I am ſorry you are ſo hard puſh'd at.

Yo. Si. What would you do in my caſe?

Eld. Si. Indeed that's hard to ſay too; I would act as my conſcience ſhould tell me was my duty; I confeſs, there is a powerful force in a father's command.

Yo. Si. No father can command counter to God's command.

Eld. Si. That's true, my dear; but conſider, child, how far God's command lies on you here; I know your text, "Be not unequally yoked;" and I remember my dear mother's words, that this cannot be underſtood of any thing but a religious perſon marrying with a profane.

Yo. Si. Well, Siſter; and you remember the charge ſhe gave us, and the promiſe we made her:

I look upon theſe things to be very binding in themſelves, and very ſacred engagements.

Eld. Si. They are binding indeed to what is our duty at the ſame time, and they add force to it; otherwiſe the caſe would differ.

Yo. Si. Juſt ſo I underſtand it; and I am ſure, reaſon, experience, and the nature of the thing join with it: what a wretched houſe muſt there be, whether it be the man or the woman's caſe, where one is a Chriſtian, and the other an infidel; one devout, the other profane: one pious and religious, and the other knowing or valuing nothing that is ſerious? What helps to Heaven are ſuch to one another! For my part, I need no wicked diſcouragements to pull me back in my duty, no ill examples to allure me to folly; I want all the aſſiſtance poſſible the other way.

Eld. Si. You preach like an oracle, child: I cannot oppoſe one word you ſay: but what muſt you do? you heard what ſad raſh reſolutions my father made.

Yo. Si. No, I did not hear them; and I am glad I did not: but as I am ſure I am right, I muſt do my duty, and truſt Providence: if my father does not do the duty of his relation to me, I'll pray to God to forgive him.

Eld. Si. Well, but what will you do with Mr —?

Yo. Si. I have no thought about him now, I am pretty well over it.

Eld. Si. But you muſt not be rude to him, even upon my father's account.

Yo. Si. Nay, I would not be rude to him for his own ſake, for I have no quarrel at him.

Eld. Si. How will you avoid it if you do not ſee him?

Yo. Si. See him! I would not venture to ſee him upon any account.

Eld. Si. Child, what do you call venture! you are undone, if you don't ſee him.

Yo. Si. I dare not truſt myſelf to ſee him; I am pretty well over it now; but if I ſee him again, I know not what influence my own weakneſs may have upon my reſolution: for I muſt own to you, ſiſter, I have no averſion to him.

Eld. Si. You might as well ſay, you own you love him.

Yo. Si. Well, if I ſhould own it, perhaps it might bear being called ſo; is it not better then, that I ſhould avoid the ſtruggle between conſcience and affection?

Eld. Si. But I have a ſtrong fancy, that you ought to enter into a cloſer diſcourſe with him upon this matter: I think you do not do either him or yourſelf juſtice elſe; for firſt, perhaps, you may find, that though he talked looſely then, when he did not know, perhaps, whether we were in jeſt or in earneſt, yet if you talked ſeriouſly with him of the main point yourſelf, (for you know our diſcourſe was at a diſtance, and was rather a kind of civil raillery than argument), you may find one of theſe two things will happen, *viz.* either he will talk ſeriouſly, and let you ſee that he has a bottom of religious good ſentiments, which is all you ought to inſiſt upon, and would be a happy diſcovery on your ſide, or talk profanely, and be ſelf-convicted.

Yo. Si. There is more weight in this, than in all you have ſaid yet; but I can never do it.

Eld. Si. Well, let me add to it, what I was loth to tell you, and that is, what my father ſaid juſt now when he went away.

[She tells her father's words, which ſtaggers her reſolution.]

Yo. Si. My father uſes me very hardly.

Eld. Si. I am ſorry for it; but it is in nobody's power to help it; he would be the ſame to any of us.

Yo. Si. What would you adviſe me to do then?

Eld. Si. Truly, if I might adviſe you, I would have you ſee him once more.

Yo. Si. To what purpoſe?

Eld. Si. Why, if it be only to try, whether what he ſaid before was in jeſt, or in earneſt.

Yo. Si. I think the diſcovery is not worth the compliment.

Eld. Si. Really, I cannot ſay that. Would you be contented to have it true, that he is a ſober and religious-inclined gentleman?

Yo. Si. Yes, with all my heart.

Eld. Si. Is not an eſtate of near 2000 l. a-year, and an agreeable gentleman, very ſuitable, when it is joined with a good Chriſtian?

Yo. Si. I allow it all.

Eld. Si. Well; and you have really nôt made trial enough, to reſolve whether it be ſo or no.

Yo. Si. So you would have me ſee him once more, to try if I can perſuade myſelf to be cheated?

Eld. Si. That's unkind: would I have you to be cheated! No, far be it from me! but I would have you leave no room to blame yourſelf hereafter.

Yo. Si. You almoſt perſuade me to let him come to-night; but if he does, I ſhall be very ill-natur'd to him: I queſtion whether I ſhall be civil to him, or no.

Eld. Si. That is not my propoſal; you may do it, and be very civil and obliging too, let the thing take a turn which way it will; and I wiſh you would try.

Yo. Si. Well, I think I will venture then.

DIALOGUE II.

THE young lady, having reſolved to ſee her gentleman once more, at the perſuaſion of her ſiſter, there needed nothing to be done but to ſit ſtill till evening, when he was ſure to come. It ſeems ſhe had reſolved to ſend a footman to him, to tell him ſhe was gone out of town for two or three days, and ſo to prevent his coming, till her father ſhould tell him in general, that it could not be a match; and to make it good, ſhe had ordered her father's coach to be ready to carry her to Hampſtead, to an unele's houſe ſhe had there; but on this occaſion ſhe deferred it, and in the evening he came, as uſual, to wait on her. It would not perhaps be poſſible to ſet down the particulars of the courtſhip of this night, there being a great deal of variety in it, and nobody preſent but themſelves: but the beſt account we have of it being from her own mouth, I have ſet it down as ſhe related it to her ſiſter in the following dialogue.

As ſoon as the gentleman was gone, which, his entertainment being not much to his mind, was ſome hours ſooner than uſual, ſhe came directly to her ſiſter, who was expecting her with the utmoſt impatience, though ſhe did not look for her ſo ſoon neither as ſhe came: the following dialogue will give an idea of the whole.

As ſoon as ſhe came to her ſiſter, ſhe prevented her thus:

Well, ſiſter, you have a nice gueſs with you; it is all as you ſaid, and the buſineſs is now all done and over.

1ſt Si. Well, before I enter into particulars, are you pleaſed and ſatisfied?

3*d Si.* Perfectly ſatisfied and pleaſed.

1*ſt Si.* Are you pleaſed that you have ſeen him?

3*d Si.* Thoroughly pleaſed: I would not but have ſeen him again for any good.

1*ſt Si.* Is it as you expected?

3*d Si.* Ay, ay, juſt as I expected; a true gentleman, perfectly educated, politely bred, that knows about as much religion as a parſon's horſe; that is to ſay, knows the way to the church-door, but ſcorns to debauch his breeding with ſuch a clumſy thing as religion; is more a gentleman than to trouble himſelf with the meanneſs of religion, and not hypocrite enough to pretend to the ſublimer parts of it; one that has not been long enough in this world, to think of the next, nor is yet come to any reſolution about when he ſhall.

1*ſt Si.* I am ſorry for it; I aſſure you it is not as I expected.

3*d Si.* But it is as I expected, I aſſure you.

1*ſt Si.* Well, but though it is, I believe you are not ſorry you met him.

3*d Si.* No, no, not at all, I aſſure you; I am much the better ſatisfied that I have now the open declarations of it from his own mouth.

1*ſt Si.* You ſurpriſe me; I thought he had had more policy than ſo.

3*d Si.* I aſſure you, as I told you, he is no hypocrite. He is not aſhamed to be believed to be full as bad as he is, and made no doubt but I would like him the better for it.

1*ſt Si.* That's hard another way; he could not think you were ſo too, ſure.

3*d Si.* Why, he does not think he does any thing amiſs, I aſſure you; and takes it ill to be thought miſtaken.

1*ſt Si.* I can ſcarce form all this in my mind. I wiſh you would tell me ſome of the hiſtory of this

night's ſalutation, now it is ſo freſh in your thoughts.

3d Si. With all my heart; but it will be a long ſtory.

1ſt Si. No matter for that; it will be the more profitable, and, I dare ſay, not the leſs diverting.

3d Si. Why, after we had been together about half an hour, he ſeemed to recollect himſelf, and told me, he aſked my pardon, that he had not condoled with me for the loſs of my uncle Sir James; I told him, he need not; for the loſs was not ſo great. He replied, he thought I appeared very much concerned at it laſt night, which made him withdraw ſooner than he intended. I told him I was thoughtful indeed, but not ſo much about that; for though I believed my aunt was very ſorry for his death, yet I thought ſhe had no great reaſon; for I was ſure ſhe lived a very uncomfortable life with him. He wanted then very much to know, what I was ſo thoughtful about, if I was not troubled at the loſs of my uncle. I declined telling him, but did it in a way that I intended ſhould prompt his curioſity; for I deſired nothing more than to have a fair opportunity to tell him very plainly what troubled me; and he ſoon gave it me. He told me, he took himſelf to ſo much intereſted in me now, as to be concerned in all my griefs; and he claimed to know if any thing afflicted me, that he might bear his ſhare in it; and added ſomething ſo handſome and ſo obliging on that head, that I muſt acknowledge it ſhook my reſolution very much; and I had almoſt given over my deſign; but I recovered myſelf again in a moment or two.

1ſt Si. Indeed you are a reſolute girl: I think what you repeat of him was very engaging.

3d Si. I told him, it was natural for people to make ſudden tranſitions from other people's caſe to their own, and that indeed that was the occaſion

that made me ſo uneaſy. I knew my aunt was a lady of great piety and virtue, that every one knew to be exceeding religious and ſerious: That, on the other hand, Sir James was a mad, frolicſome, merry fellow, that neither underſtood any religion, or troubled himſelf much about it, but would play a thouſand mad tricks with her, becauſe of her ſtrict obſervation of religious things; and that this gave her a conſtant uneaſineſs. He ſmiled, and ſaid, He hoped I was not afraid of him on that ſcore; for, Madam, ſays he, though I pretend to no religion myſelf, I cannot but reſpect them that do. This was the firſt, and I think a conſiderable confirmation of what we had before; was it not, ſiſter?

1*ſt Si.* I am ſorry to hear it; but I'll tell you, however, there was one thing that I obſerve to be a good foundation for religion, *viz.* That he reſpected them that were religious.

3*d Si.* Ay, ſiſter; but we did not end here: I told him that I was ſorry to hear him ſay he had no religion in him; becauſe, as perhaps I had not a great deal, to marry a man that had none, would endanger my loſing what I had, and I ſhould rather have a huſband to help me on towards heaven, than to pull me back.

1*ſt Si.* What could he ſay to that?

3*d Si.* He told me, he did not doubt but I would go to heaven without his help. He ſaid, jeſtingly, it was a road he had never travelled; but I might be aſſured, he would not willingly pull me back, if he did not help me on.

1*ſt Si.* Well, there was ſomething very honeſt in that too.

3*d Si.* That's true, ſiſter; but negative religion is but a poor ſtock to begin on.

1*ſt Si.* But it is better than a deſpiſer of religion: you ought to have acknowledged what good you found.

3*d Si.* My deſigns lay another way; I aim'd at a fuller diſcovery, and I ſoon found it.

1*ſt Si.* Well, go on then.

3*d Si.* I told him, what tricks my uncle uſed to ſerve my aunt; how he got a book of devotions out of her cloſet once, and got a long printed ſtory about ducking a ſcold paſted into it; and another time got the ballad of Chevy Chace bound into her pſalm-book; how when he knew ſhe was in her cloſet at her devotion, he would bring his huntſman to feed the hounds juſt under her window; and how one time he made a fellow cry fire, and the like; as you know, ſiſter, he played many ſuch pranks, and would do any thing to put her thoughts into diſorder. He told me, though he was but a young fellow, and had not troubled his thoughts much about religion, (there was another ſtab to my affections, ſiſter), yet he ſaid he could not bear to make a jeſt of it neither.

1*ſt Si.* Well, but that was another word in his favour too.

3*d Si.* I replied, I was very ſorry to hear him own, that he had not troubled his thoughts about religion, and aſked him upon what foundation he could think of ſetting up a family, if that was his caſe? He told me he kept a chaplain, and jeſtingly told me, he was devout enough for all the reſt of the houſe. I grew chagrin and dull; I told him that theſe things had filled me with very ſad thoughts about marrying, and it looked very diſmal to me; but all I could ſay, could not bring him to believe I was in earneſt.

1*ſt Si.* I believe he is really very good-humoured.

3*d Si.* Ay, ſiſter, that's true; but I look for ſomething farther in a huſband, or I am reſolved I'll have no huſband at all.

1*ſt Si.* Well, but pray go on with your ſtory; what anſwer did he make?

3d Si. He laughed at me, and told me he believed marrying would make him mighty religious; that he would chuſe a wife firſt, and then chuſe his religion.

1ſt Si. The man was mad, ſure, to open himſelf ſo fully.

3d Si. I appeared then really diſturbed; and, whether he perceiv'd it or no, I am ſure the tears ſtood in my eyes: however, I ſtruggled with my diſorder, and told him I was very ſorry then that it was his misfortune to begin with one that could not be content to marry upon thoſe terms; and hoped when he was fully ſatisfied of the reaſon of ſuch a reſolution in me, he would not take it ill, that I ſhould ſtay for him, till he had reſolved more ſeriouſly upon a thing of ſo much importance.

1ſt Si. That was very cunningly anſwered.

3d Si. Then he began to think I was in earneſt, and told me, he hoped I would not talk ſo, becauſe it might be longer than he deſired to be without me.

1ſt Si. That was ſtill making the caſe worſe; for it was as much as to ſay, he neither had any religion, nor intended to have any.

3d Si. I did not fail to take it ſo; and told him, the longer he was without me, it might be the better for him; but the longer he was without religion, I was ſure would be the worſe for him; and that I wondered how a man of his ſenſe could talk ſo. He replied, he had rather talk of any thing elſe; for he found this diſcourſe did not pleaſe me. I told him, he miſtook me very much; for though I confeſſed it did not pleaſe me to find him to be what I hoped he was not, that is, a perſon who pretended to no religion: yet it pleaſed me very well, that he had been ſo juſt to himſelf, as to let me know it, before any engagements had paſſed between us.

1ſt Si. If I had not known that my ſiſter was

never courted before, I ſhould have thought you had paſſed a great many ſuch encounters as theſe.

3*d Si.* You know it is all new to me; but however, I knew the thing was for my life, and that I muſt ſpeak now or never; and I was reſolved to put an end to it.

1*ſt Si.* I muſt own you were in the right. tho' I am perſuaded I could not have ſaid half ſo much.

3*d Si.* Why, you han't heard the half of it yet; I made him angry, ſerious, laugh, and I think verily, once I made him almoſt cry.

1*ſt Si.* I am ſorry I interrupted you. Pray go on then: what ſaid he next?

3*d Si.* He ſaid, he wondered I could ſay that no engagements were between us. He ſaid he was ſo engaged to me, as he could never go back. I anſwered, that as his engagements were from himſelf, ſo they were beſt known to himſelf; but he knew very well I was under none to him. He ſmiled then, and ſaid, he hoped I was. I anſwered, I had not profeſſed to be engaged; I told him I would not deny, that I had reſpect enough for him to have gone farther, had not ſuch difficulties appeared, as I could never get over, and had he been the perſon he was repreſented; but that, as it was, I had too much reſpect for myſelf to ruin myſelf with my eyes open, and too much reſpect for him to keep him in ſuſpenſe.

1*ſt Si.* Would he not take that for being in earneſt?

3*d Si.* Yes, he ſhewed me then that he took me to be in earneſt, and ſhewed me that he was in earneſt too; for he appeared warm, and a little angry, He told me, he was very ſorry to be charged with deceiving me; and aſked, if ever he had ſaid any thing of himſelf which was not true? For, Madam, ſays he, if I am not the perſon I appeared to be, I muſt have deceived you in ſomething; pray

what ſort of perſon did you take me for? I replied, as warm as he, that I wondered he ſhould miſtake me ſo much; that I thought he did not do me juſtice; that I had ſaid indeed he was not the perſon he had been repreſented, but never ſaid, that he had repreſented himſelf one way or other. Then he begged me pardon again, and told me, he had taken me wrong; that whatever came of it, he would never deceive me; I ſhould know the worſt of him, whether I would have him or no. Indeed, Sir, ſaid I, I am perſuaded you are no hypocrite. I underſtand you, ſaid he, you think I have uſed more honeſty than diſcretion. No, Sir, ſaid I, I very much approve your honeſty, and do not blame your diſcretion at all. But I do, ſaid he; for I find, if I could have counterfeited more ſerious things than I am maſter of, and feigned myſelf a little religious, all had been well. I told him, I would not ſay that it was not in his power to have deceived me; but I hoped he had acted a part much more like a gentleman. He replied, that it was hard then I ſhould make ſo unkind a return to him as to make him loſe his miſtreſs for his honeſty.

1ſt Si. Why really, ſiſter, ſo it was.

3d Si. I told him I thought the beſt return was to treat him with the ſame ſincerity, and that was the reaſon of the freedom I took; that as he told me plainly what he was, I muſt tell him plainly, I could not think of engaging with him any farther, till he had thought a little of thoſe things, which alone could make it reaſonable for him to think of marrying. He would fain have turned it off to a jeſt; he laughed at me, he bantered me, he aſked me how long I would ſtay for him? I told him I was in no haſte. He aſked me, how long I thought I might ſtay, before I got a ſaint to my mind, as the world went now? I told him, I was but an ill judge of ſaints, and might be cheated, as wiſer than

I had been; but that, as I told him before, I would not fall into the pit with my eyes open. He told me abruptly, he wiſhed I had never ſeen him. At that word, I confeſs, I was a little alarmed; however, I made no anſwer, but looked full in his face: I ſaw he was concerned, and as I thought, in a kind of paſſion. When he found I looked at him, he repeated the words thus, I wiſh with all my heart you had never ſeen me. I anſwered nothing. He added, he wiſhed he had known my mind ſooner. I ſtill ſaid nothing. Then he flung himſelf into my arms, and hung about me: My dear, ſays he, with an inexpreſſible tenderneſs, why are you ſilent? Becauſe, ſays I, I would not give you an anſwer in kind to any thing that is diſobliging. He returned, it was impoſſible for him to ſay or do any thing diſobliging to me; that it was true he wiſhed I had never ſeen him, and that he had known my mind ſooner; but it was that he might have diſguiſed himſelf better, and not have loſt me for his being ſo fooliſhly honeſt. Why, ſaid I, would you have endeavoured to have cheated me? Ay, certainly, ſaid he, rather than loſe you; and would have done it effectually too. Why, what would you have done? ſaid I. Done! replied he, I would have been the ſobereſt, graveſt young fellow that ever you ſaw in your life. And do you think yourſelf hypocrite enough, ſaid I, to have concealed yourſelf effectually? Why not? ſaid he, perhaps you think I am too much a fool for it. No Sir, ſaid I, I think you are too honeſt for it; and of the two, it is much the better on your ſide.

1ſt Si. This was a kind of turn and return between jeſt and earneſt; but how did it end?

3d Si. Why, he carried it on thus a long time, till he put an odd caſe to me, which made me put a ſhort end to the diſcourſe: We were ſpeaking of fortunes, and the grandeur of families; at laſt we

came to ſpeak of the young Duke of——. Why now, ſays he, if his Grace ſhould come and court you with the ſtate and grandeur of his quality, the title of a ducheſs, *&c.* you would not turn ſhort upon him, as you did upon me, and ſay, My Lord Duke, pray what religion are you of? and yet he has no more religion than I. I told him, I thought he did not treat me fairly: that it was ſaying nothing at all, to ſay I would not have this man or that man, who never made any pretenſions to me; it was enough to me, that I would let him know, I would refuſe all the men in the world that ſhould ever come to me, unleſs I found a reverence of God, a ſenſe of religion, and a profeſſion at leaſt of the duty we owe to our Maker, had made ſome impreſſions on them: That I might be deceived indeed with an hypocrite, for it was not in me to judge of the heart, and as the world was now ſtated, it was but too probable I ſhould; but then it ſhould be my miſery, not my fault: and that ſince he ſeemed to inſinuate, that I did not act in that affair with ſincerity, I had no better ſpecimen of my reſolution than this, that though I was very ſorry to treat him ſo, who I was ſatisfied, had a reſpect for me; and whoſe reſpect I acknowledged was not diſagreeable, and whoſe eſtate and propoſals were very much better than I had reaſon to expect; yet that, upon this one ſingle account, I aſſured him I neither could nor would ever diſcourſe more with him on this affair; and hoped he would not take it ill, that I was forced to be ſo plain with him, before I could perſuade him I was in earneſt. And having ſaid all this, I offered to riſe and retire; but he held me faſt in his arms, and would not let me ſtir.

1*ſt Si.* Cruel wretch! how could you talk ſo to him? how did he look?

3*d Si.* Look! I confeſs, ſiſter, his looks mov'd

me more than all the words he could have ſaid in half a year; and I ſhall never forget them. He ſeemed ſtrangely affected, and once or twice I ſaw tears in his eyes; but he turned his head away, and recovered himſelf, and embarked me in another diſcourſe, in ſpite of all I had ſaid. Hold, ſays he, you have broke one poſitive promiſe you made me already. I told him, I did not remember that I had ever made him any promiſe at all. Yes, ſays he, you told me juſt now you would ſtay for me, till I had made a choice in matters of religion. I told him, I had not broke that promiſe yet. Yes, he ſaid, I had, in ſaying I would never diſcourſe more with him on this affair. I replied, then, that I would except that circumſtance, though I thought he need not inſiſt on it, for ſeveral reaſons: *Firſt*, Becauſe he might find ſo many young ladies abroad, who would not trouble their heads to make the objection I had done, and that there was no occaſion for him to turn religious for a wife. *Secondly*, Becauſe there was no appearance of his returning upon thoſe terms. He ſaid, that was more than I knew. But, pray, Madam, ſaid he, why do you lay ſuch a mighty ſtreſs upon this particular? Religion is an entire article by itſelf; my being religious, or not religious, need not obſtruct our affection to one another; I am no enemy to religion. I anſwered, that it was indeed an acceptable thing, as times went now, not to find gentlemen deſpiſers and haters of religion, and of all that favour'd it: but that I was aſſured, where there was not a profeſſion of religion, and where God was not acknowledged, there could be no bleſſing expected; and that I ſhould think I had renounced God, and declared war againſt Heaven, if I ſhould marry a man that openly acknowledged he had no religion. He told me, he was ſorry to ſee me run things to ſuch an extremity;

that he did not think I had been in earneſt, when he in jeſt, ſaid, he had not thought of religion; that he would not urge me in a thing which I laid ſo much ſtreſs upon, but would wait on me again, and hoped to find me in another mind, and to let me know he was not quite ſo bad as I thought him to be. And thus we broke up.

1*ſt Si.* What, did he go away angry?

3*d Si.* Truly, I cannot ſay how he was; he ſeemed diſturbed and uneaſy, and went away willinger than I expected.

1*ſt Si.* Ay, ay, and willinger than you deſired too; I can perceive it, ſiſter, well enough.

3*d Si.* Why, I cannot deny but I have acted all this by a force upon my affection: but I ſhould have been undone; I ſhould never have had any peace, or expected any bleſſing on the match; for as a religious life is the only heaven upon earth, if it pleaſe God to ſupport my reſolution, I'll never ſell the proſpect of it for an eſtate, or for the moſt agreeable perſon alive.

1*ſt Si.* It is nobly reſolved, ſiſter! I hope you will be ſupported in ſo juſt a reſolution; but do you think he will come no more?

3*d Si.* I hope not; but if he does, I reſolve not to ſee him, if I can avoid it.

We muſt now leave the two ſiſters a while, and follow the young gentleman a little; for his ſtory does not end ſo. He went away very much concerned, as above, and particularly it touched him very ſenſibly, that he ſhould be taken for ſuch a creature, that a ſober, virtuous lady (for ſuch he was ſure his miſtreſs was) ſhould refuſe him merely on account of his wicked character; and that though ſhe acknowledged ſhe had a reſpect for him, ſhe was obliged to ſhun him, purely becauſe ſhe was afraid

of him, as a hater of religion, and therefore dangerous to live with. It has run often into his mind, that ſhe had ſaid, ſhe could expect no bleſſing with him; and that if ſhe married him, ſhe ſhould think ſhe had renounced God, and declared war againſt Heaven; ſo that, to be ſure, I am a dreadful fellow, ſays he, that ſhe dares not take me, leſt ſhe ſhould appear to be a confederate with one of God's enemies.

It then occurred to him, that it really was no otherwiſe in fact; that ſhe was in the right in it all; that he had in truth no religion, or ſenſe of God, upon his mind, nor had ever entertained any notions of religion in his thoughts, and had told her ſo himſelf; and that therefore the young lady was in the right of it, and if ſhe had any fund of religion herſelf, had a great deal of reaſon to refuſe him; that every ſober woman ought to refuſe him upon the ſame account; and that ſhe, that did not, was not fit to make him a wife, or at leaſt ſuch a wife as he could expect any happineſs from; that this young lady had made a true judgment, and it was his buſineſs, not to think of perſuading her to alter her mind, which, in ſhort, muſt leſſen his opinion of her, but to conſider what ſtate and condition he was in, and what was his firſt buſineſs to do, to deliver himſelf out of it, before he went to her any more.

He grew uneaſy upon this ſubject for ſome time, and being perfectly ignorant of every thing called duty, having had an education wholly void of inſtruction, that uneaſineſs increaſed; and not knowing which way to caſt his thoughts for immediate direction, he grew very melancholy and dejected: he loved this young woman to an extreme, and that affection was infinitely increaſed by her conduct in this affair, and by the extraordinary manner of her refuſing him: but the reproaches of his heart, as being ſuch a monſter, that a woman, that even

owned ſhe loved him, durſt not join herſelf to him, doubled upon him, as his affections for her increaſed.

He could not think of coming to her again; for he confeſſed the reaſons, which ſhe gave for her not daring to take him, were ſo juſt, and ſhe had argued them ſo well, that if ſhe ſhould abate any thing of them, he ſhould not have ſo much eſteem for her as he had before; and yet he ſaw, that if ſhe did not, he could never expect to have her; and yet alſo he could not bear the thoughts of not having her, for all that.

He lived in this uneaſy condition ſome months: his friends, perceiving him to be very melancholy, tried many ways to divert him; but none reached his caſe, or if they did, they underſtood not how to adviſe him; for his relations were moſt like himſelf, people of levity and gallantry, being rich and gay; a family that dealt very little in matters of religion: he had an aunt, his mother's ſiſter, who ſeemed very much concerned about it; but as ſhe thought, all that ailed him was his being croſſed in his affection, ſhe worked her thoughts about, night and day, to find out a wife for him, and ſo to take his thoughts off, and turn them another way: at length, ſhe found out a young lady in the city, of a very great fortune; for ſhe had near 20,000 l. to her portion, and ſhe plied it ſo warmly with him, that he conſented to treat of it with her friends; and his circumſtances being ſuch as few fortunes would refuſe, he found his way clear enough, and ſo went to viſit the young lady.

It was an odd kind of courtſhip, you may be ſure, and he went about it accordingly: for, as he confeſſed afterward, he reſolved, before he ſaw her, not to like her, or any thing ſhe ſaid or did; no, nor ever to be in earneſt with her upon the thing; but

only to jeſt with and banter her; and he told his aunt ſo before-hand. However, his aunt would not take him at his word, but would have him wait upon her, and ſo he did; but he needed not to have taken up any reſolutions in the caſe, for he was ſpoiled for courtſhip already, at leaſt, for moſt of the ladies of the times; he had no reliſh for any of their converſation; it was like muſic to one that had no ear; all the gaiety and flutter about them was loſt upon him; his firſt miſtreſs had treated him with ſuch ſolid reaſoning, ſuch ſerious talk, and had handled him after ſuch a manner, that in ſhort nothing but what was ſerious had now any reliſh with him; however, as I have ſaid, he reſolved to put a force upon himſelf ſo far, as to go and ſee what kind of thing his new miſtreſs was: and accordingly he did go, as above.

But when he had been one evening there, and had talked a little with her, he ſoon ſaw he had no need of making reſolutions; that he was in no danger of being inſnared by her; the levity of her behaviour, the emptineſs of her diſcourſe, the weakneſs of her conduct, made him ſick of her the very firſt time; and when he came away, he ſaid to himſelf, Is it poſſible for any man in his ſenſes to bear this ſhittlecock, that had but been one half-hour with my other miſtreſs! And away he came, not pleaſed at all. However, he went again for ſome time, till at laſt, not finding things mend, but rather grow worſe, he was reſolved he would talk a little with her about religion; and as he aſked her one night, What religion ſhe was of? ſhe anſwered him juſt in the very words that he had bantered his other miſtreſs; O, ſays ſhe, I am a mighty good Chriſtian. I believe ſo, thought he; juſt ſuch another as I was when I was aſked the ſame queſtion. However, he concealed his thoughts, reſolved to carry

it on a little farther, and gave her a mighty civil anſwer: I don't doubt that, Madam, ſays he. Well, ſays ſhe, then, what would you have more? Nay, nothing, Madam, returned he, I was only in jeſt. O, ſays ſhe, you want to know what opinion I am of! You ſee I am no Quaker. No, ſays he, Madam, I am not concerned about your opinion; you may eaſily have as much religion as I. Nay, ſays ſhe, I have never troubled my head much about it; I don't know what I may do when I keep a chaplain. He had enough of that diſcourſe, and ſo he turned it off to ſomething elſe; for though it was almoſt the pattern of what he had done with his firſt miſtreſs, yet it looked with ſuch a different face to him now, that, as he ſaid afterwards, it made his very blood run cold within him, and filled him with horror at his own picture, which he thought, now was ſet before his eyes, in all its juſt deformities. When he came away from her, he ſaid to himſelf, Well, now I ſee the true force of what that dear creature argued for herſelf againſt me; that to venture upon me while I declared againſt religion, was to run herſelf into the pit with her eyes open, and ruin herſelf by mere premeditated choice. It would be juſt ſo with me in this caſe, if I ſhould marry this butterfly; we ſhould even go hand in hand very lovingly to the devil. This will not do my buſineſs. So he put an end to that affair as ſoon as he could, and reſolved to ſee her no more.

All this while he had no aſſiſtance from either books, friends, miniſters, or any body, only the juſt and natural reflections of his own reaſon: but as he was a gentleman of polite manners, and bred to converſation with gentlemen of the beſt quality, as well as of the beſt parts, ſo the government of himſelf was the more eaſy, and he reſtrained the dejection of his ſpirits from making any extraordinary

diſcovery of itſelf, only that he appeared a little more ſedate and more thoughtful than before, and was a little more retired in his way of living; but not ſo much but that he came often into public company, as before.

It happened one time, that in promiſcuous converſation at a chocolate-houſe near the court, this gentleman and ſeven or eight more being preſent, the company fell from talking of news to talking of religion: the diſcourſe began about the differences which had happened in France lately, and were then depending, between the Pope and the French clergy; and of the Sorbonne, or faculty of theology, as they are called there, being at that time employed in drawing up a new ſyſtem of divinity, or body of doctrine, as they called it; and as a conſequence it was hinted, how likely it was, that ſuch a ſtrict inquiry, made by men of learning and virtue, into the fundamentals of religion, ſhould lead them at laſt into Proteſtant principles, and break that whole kingdom off from the errors and ignorance of Popery, opening the eyes of the people to Chriſtian knowledge. There being ſome ſober and ſenſible gentlemen there, the diſcourſe was carried on very gravely and judiciouſly, and the whole company ſeemed to receive it with pleaſure; when a couple of young beaus, who happened to be in the room, beginning to be tired with a thing ſo much out of their way, one of them riſes up on a ſudden, and ſays to the other, Come, Jack, I am tired of this dull religious ſtuff; prithee let us go, there's nothing in it. Ay, ſays the other, with all my heart, I know nothing of the matter: come, will you go to the opera? There ſat another young gentleman of their acquaintance there, and they pulled him to come with them: No, ſays he, I like this diſcourſe very well, it is worth two operas to me. Why, ſays the other, how long

have you been in orders, pray? Is ſuch ſtuff as that fit converſation for gentlemen? Yes, ſays the ſober young gentleman, I think it is: pray, what can there be in religious converſation that is unfit for a gentleman? There ſat an ancient nobleman by, talking with a clergyman, who hearing the young gentleman's reply, fell a-laughing; for this diſcourſe put the former ſubject to a ſtop. On my word, Gentlemen, ſays his Lordſhip, Mr —— has met with you: I don't think you can anſwer his queſtion. Yes, my Lord, ſays the fooliſh beau, I think it is below a man of quality to trouble his head about it. Pray, Sir, ſays the Lord, is it below a man of quality to be a Chriſtian? O, my Lord, ſays the other beau, bantering and jeſting, we are mighty good Chriſtians at the opera; and turning away to his comrade, ſays he, Come, come, Jack, prithee let us go: ſo they went both out together, for they did not care to engage. Our gentleman liſtened with pleaſure to all this diſcourſe, till he heard that word, *mighty good Chriſtians;* and then reflected upon his having uſed that expreſſion to his miſtreſs, and how his laſt lady gave him the ſame return; but he thought it was ſo empty, ſo abſurd a turn to a thing of that conſequence, that he reproached himſelf with having talked ſo fooliſhly, and was aſhamed to think, how like one of theſe fops he had appeared to her; and how he had talked after the ſame ſenſeleſs way, which he now looked upon to be the moſt empty, ſcandalous thing in the world.

When the two young rakes were gone, the Lord, turning to the young gentleman that had refuſed them, complimented him on his having given them ſo handſome an anſwer, and having run them both aground in one inquiry. My Lord, ſaid the gentleman, if my queſtion run them a-ground, your Lordſhip's queſtion quite confounded them. Indeed, my

Lord, continued he, it is too much the notion now, eſpecially among perſons of quality, that it is below them to be religious. My Lord ſaid, It was ſo indeed; but that he would fain aſk ſuch people, whether they thought St Paul was a gentleman or no? and whether he did not ſhew as much good breeding and good manners, when he appeared before Agrippa, Feſtus, and the governor Sergius Paulus, as any nobleman in Britain could have done at the bar of the houſe of Lords? Upon this ſubject his Lordſhip went on for half an hour, with a diſcourſe ſo handſome, ſo to the purpoſe, and yet ſo ſerious, that it highly entertained the company; ſhewing how it became every man of quality to behave himſelf in ſubjection to the rules given him by his Maker, as it became every ſubject to honour his governor; how piety and religion were the glory of a man of quality, and made nobility truly illuſtrious; that it was ſo far from being true, that religion was not ſuited to the life of a gentleman, that it was certain a man could not truly be a gentleman without it; that religion was ſo far from being a dull phlegmatic thing, and uſeleſs in converſation, as was the faſhionable notion of the town, that really no man could be ſo bright, ſo perfectly eaſy, ſo chearful, ſo ſociable, and ſo always in humour for ſociety, as a Chriſtian; that religion was the beauty of converſation, and aſſiſted to make it pleaſant and agreeable; that without it company was empty, diſcourſe unprofitable, ſociety unpleaſant; and, in ſhort, that converſation, without a mixture of ſomething regarding religion, and a due connection with it, was like a dance without muſic, or a ſong without meaſure; like poetry without quantity, or ſpeech without grammar: That it was a miſtake to think Chriſtianity received honour from the dignity of the perſons who profeſſed it; and his Lordſhip ſaid, he wondered to hear men expreſs

themſelves ſo abſurdly vain, as to ſay, ſuch a man is an honour to religion; that the thing was true only in the reverſe, and it ſhould be ſaid, religion is an honour to ſuch a perſon: That it was a contradiction in the very nature of the thing, to ſay ſuch a man was noble, great, honourable, or a gentleman, without religion; and it might, with every jot as much ſenſe, be ſaid ſo of a perſon who had neither birth, family or manners.

Our gentleman came home charmed with this diſcourſe, as indeed the whole company were beſides; eſpecially conſidering the authority and dignity of the perſon who ſpoke it. His mind was inſpired with new thoughts by it, both of religion and of himſelf; he not only ſaw more of the excellency of religion in itſelf, but began to ſee clearly it was the ornament of a gentleman to be a Chriſtian. It was with the greateſt contempt that he now looked back upon the notion he had formerly eſpouſed of a gentleman's being above troubling himſelf with ſerious things. How ſordid and brutiſh did the two beaus appear, ſaid he, compared to that noble and excellent perſon, my Lord ——! How were they laugh'd at and deſpiſed by all the gentlemen in the company, and looked upon as fellows fit for nothing, but in the highway to diſaſter! On the other hand, it occurred to him, how handſomely did that young gentleman anſwer them! with what modeſty did he ſpeak, and yet boldly, in defence of a religious life! and what an honour was paid him for it by all the company, and by the nobleman in particular! and then to think of what that Lord had ſaid, with what applauſe it was received; how all the company liſtened to his Lordſhip, as to an oracle; how general a conſent was given to it by all the gentlemen; and, in a word, how agreeable the converſation of the day was, put it all together; and yet,

ſaid he, of eleven gentlemen in the room, there was not one man among them except the clergyman, who was not above me both in quality and eſtate.

From all this he drew this general and happy concluſion for himſelf, *viz.* That he ſhould never be a complete gentleman, till he became a religious man; and that the more of a Chriſtian he was, the fitter he ſhould be for the converſation of the beſt and greateſt men in the kingdom; and in conſequence of this reſolution, he reſolved to apply himſelf ſeriouſly to the ſtudy of religious things.

To avoid the uſual diverſions of the town, while theſe ſerious thoughts were upon him, he reſolved to retire into the country, to a little ſeat he had in Hampſhire, remote from all converſation, and where he had nobody to talk to, but his own ſervants, or ſome of the neighbourhood, who were all his tenants. When he found himſelf ſo perfectly alone, it began to be a little too much for him, and he grew very heavy, and a little hypochondriac: his mind was oppreſſed with the thoughts of his circumſtances, but dark as to the due inquiries he ought to have made; at length he rouſed himſelf a little with theſe thoughts.

I talk of being religious! and being a Chriſtian! why, I underſtand nothing of it, or how to go about it. What is it? what is religion? and what is it to be a Chriſtian? He poſed himſelf with theſe queſtions, and knew not what anſwer to give himſelf, when it came thus into his mind, Did not that dear preacher (meaning the young lady he had courted) tell me what religion was, and how ſhe underſtood it, *viz.* A reverence of God, a ſenſe of his worſhip, and impreſſions of duty to him that made us? This certainly is religion, and this is to be religious: but which way muſt I go about it?

He was ſeriouſly muſing on this part one evening,

walking all alone in a field near his house, when he began to look with great concern upon the want, whichhe felt, of an early foundation laid in his mind by a religious education. Sure, said he to himself, we that are men of fortune, are the most unhappy part of mankind; we are taught nothing: our ancestors have had so little notion of religion themselves, that they never so much as thought of it for their children: I don't wonder they have thought it below them; for knowing little or nothing of it themselves, they had no other excuse to one another for the leaving their children entirely destitute of it, but by pretending it was below their quality. This flung him into a reflection, which raised this sudden passionate expression, God be merciful unto me! says he: What is become of my father and grandfather! He went on thus, Who am I! a gentleman! I am attended by servants, sir'd, and worshipp'd and honour'd, here, by a parcel of poor workmen and tenants, that think themselves nothing to me, and are half frighted if they do but see me; and I am in the sight of Him that made me, and in my own too, a dog, a monster, a thousand times worse creature than the meanest of them; for I am a wretch with a soul, and yet know nothing of him that gave it me; a soul commanded to serve and obey the God that made it, and yet never taught to know him.

There lives a poor ploughman, and yonder lives a poor farmer, they both fare hard and work hard; how sober, how religious, how serious are they! how are they daily teaching and instructing their children! and how were they taught and instructed by their parents! and there's scarce a boy of ten years old in their families but knows more of God and religion than I do: I have been taught nothing, and know nothing but this, that I am under the curse of darkness, in the midst of light; ignorance, in the

midſt of knowledge: and have more to give an account of, than a negro of Afric, or a ſavage of America.

He had wandered ſo long in theſe meditations, not minding his way, that he found night coming on, and he ſcarce knew he was ſo far from his own houſe, till he looked about him, then he reſolved to go back; ſo he broke off his thoughts a while, and made a little haſte homeward. In his way he neceſſarily went by a poor labouring man's door, who, with a wife and four children, lived in a ſmall cottage on the waſte, where the gentleman was lord of the manor. As he paſſed by, he thought he heard the man's voice; and ſtepping up cloſe to the door, he perceived that the poor good old man was praying to God with his family. As he ſaid afterwards, his heart ſprung in his breaſt for joy at the occaſion, and he liſtened eagerly to what was ſaid. The poor man was, it ſeems, giving God thanks for his condition, and that of his little family, which he did with great affection; repeating how comfortably they lived, how plentifully they were provided for, how God had diſtinguiſhed them in his goodneſs; that they were alive, when others were ſnatched away by diſeaſes and diſaſters; in health, when others languiſhed with pain and ſickneſs; had food, when others were in want; at liberty, when others were in priſon; were clothed and covered, when others were naked and without habitation; concluding with admiring and adoring the wonders of God's providence and mercy to them, who had deſerved nothing.

He was confounded, and ſtruck as it were ſpeechleſs, at the ſurpriſe of what he had heard: Nothing could be more affecting to him: he came away, (for he had ſtaid as long as his heart could hold) and walked to ſome diſtance, and there ſtopt, looked

up, and round him, as he ſaid to ſee if he was awake, or if it was a dream. At laſt he got ſome vent to his thoughts, and throwing out his arms, Merciful God! ſays he, is this to be a Chriſtian! What then have I been all my days! What is this man thus thankful for? Why, my dogs live better than he does in ſome reſpects, and is he on his knees adoring infinite goodneſs for his enjoyments? Why, I have enjoyed all I have, and never had the leaſt ſenſe of God's goodneſs to me, or never once ſaid, God, I thank thee for it, in my life. Well might a ſober woman be afraid of me. Is this humble temper, this thankfulneſs for mere poverty! is this the effect of being a Chriſtian? Why, then, Chriſtians are the happieſt people in the world! Why, I ſhould hang myſelf, if I was to be reduced to a degree a hundred times above him; and yet here is peace, eaſe of mind, ſatisfaction in circumſtances, nay thankfulneſs, which is the exceſs of human felicity; and all this in a man that juſt lives one degree above ſtarving. We think our farmers poor ſlaves, who labour and drudge in the earth to ſupport us that are their landlords, and who look upon us like their lords and maſters; why, this poor wretch is but a drudge to thoſe drudges, a ſlave of ſlaves; and yet he gives God thanks for the happineſs of his condition! Is this the frame of religious people! What a monſter am I! Then he walked a little way farther, but not being able to contain his aſtoniſhment, I'll go back, ſays he, to poor William, (for he knew his name), he ſhall teach me to be a Chriſtian; for I am ſure I know nothing of it yet.

Away he goes back to the poor man's houſe, and ſtanding without, he whiſtled firſt, and then called, William! William! The poor man, his family-worſhip being over, was juſt going to ſupper, but hearing ſomebody whiſtle, he thought it might be

ſome ſtranger that had loſt his way, as is often the caſe in the country; and went to the door, where he ſaw a gentleman ſtand at ſome diſtance; but not ſeeing him perfectly, becauſe it was duſk, he aſked who it was; but was ſurpriſed when he heard his voice, and knew who it was.

Don't you know me, William? ſays his landlord.

William. Indeed I did not know your Worſhip at firſt. I am ſorry to ſee you out ſo late, an't pleaſe your Worſhip, and all alone. I hope you an't on foot too.

Landlord. Yes, I am, William: Indeed I have wandered through the wood here a little too far, before I was aware: Will you go home with me, William?

Wil. Yes, an't pleaſe your Worſhip to accept of me, with all my heart: You ſhall not go alone in the dark thus; an't pleaſe your worſhip to ſtay a bit, I'll go call Goodman Jones and his ſon too: we'll all ſee you ſafe home.

La. No, no; I'll have none but you, William; come along.

Wil. An't pleaſe you, I'll take my bill in my hand then; it is all the weapons I have.

La. Well, do then; but how will you do to leave your wife and children?

Wil. God will keep them, I hope, an't pleaſe your Worſhip; his protection is a good guard.

La. That's true, William, come along then; I hope there are no thieves about. [*They go together.*

Wil. Alas! an't pleaſe your worſhip, it is a ſorry thief would rob a cottage.

La. Well, but that little you have, William, it is ſomething to you; and you would be loath to loſe it.

Wil. Indeed I could ill ſpare what I have, though it be very mean, becauſe I could not buy more in the room of it.

La. I know you are poor, William. How many children have you?

Wil. I have four, an't pleaſe you.

La. And how do you all live?

Wil. Indeed, an't pleaſe you, we live all by my hard labour.

La. And what can you earn a-day, William?

Wil. Why, an't pleaſe you, I cannot get above 10 d. a day now; but when your Worſhip's good father was alive, he always gave the ſteward order to allow me 12 d. a day, and that was a great help to me.

La. Well, but William, can your wife get nothing?

Wil. Truly, now and then ſhe can, in the ſummer; but it is very little; ſhe's but weakly.

La. And have you always work, William?

Wil. Truly, an't pleaſe you, ſometimes I have not; and then it is very hard with us.

La. Well, but you do not want I hope, William?

Wil. No, bleſſed be God, an't pleaſe you, we do not want; no, no, God forbid I ſhould ſay we want; we want nothing but to be more thankful for what we have.

[This ſtruck him to the heart, that this poor wretch ſhould ſay he wanted nothing, &c.]

La. Thankful, William! Why, what haſt thou to be thankful for?

Wil. O dear! an't pleaſe you, I ſhould be a dreadful wretch, if I ſhould not be thankful! What ſhould become of me, if I had nothing but what I deſerve?

La. Why, what couldſt thou be worſe than thou art, William?

Wil. The Lord be praiſed, an't pleaſe your Worſhip, I might be ſick or lame, and could not work, and then we muſt all periſh; or I might be with-

out a cover; your Worſhip might turn me out of this warm cottage, and my wife and children would be ſtarved with cold: how many better Chriſtians than I are expoſed to miſery and want, and I am provided for? Bleſſed be the Lord, I want for nothing, an't pleaſe you.

[It was dark, and William could not ſee him; but he owned afterwards, that it made his heart burn within him, to hear the poor man talk thus; and the tears came out of his eyes ſo faſt, that he walked thirty or forty ſteps before he could ſpeak to him again.]

La. Poor William! thou art more thankful for thy cottage than ever I was for the manor-houſe; prithee, William, can you tell me how to be thankful too?

Wil. An't pleaſe your Worſhip, I don't doubt but you are more thankful than I; you have a vaſt eſtate, and are lord of all the country, I know not how far; to be ſure you are more thankful than I, an't pleaſe you.

La. I ought to be ſo, you mean, William; I know that; for it all comes from the ſame hand.

Wil. I don't doubt but you are very thankful to God, an't pleaſe you, to be ſure you are; for he has given your Worſhip great wealth; and where much is given, you know, an't pleaſe you, much is required; to be ſure you are much more thankful than I.

La. Truly, William, I'd give a thouſand pound I were as happy, and as thankful as thou art: prithee, William, tell me how I ſhall bring myſelf to be thankful; for though thou art a poorer man, I believe thou art a richer Chriſtian than I am.

Wil. O! an't pleaſe your Worſhip, I cannot

teach you; I am a poor labouring man; I have no learning.

La. But what made you ſo thankful, William, for little more than bread and water?

Wil. O Sir! an't pleaſe you, my old father uſed to ſay to me, that to compare what we receive with what we deſerve, will make any body thankful.

La. Indeed that's true, William: Alas! we that are gentlemen, are the unhappieſt creatures in the world; we cannot quote our fathers for any thing that is fit to be named: was thy father as thankful as thou art, William?

Wil. Yes, an't pleaſe you, Sir, and a great deal more: O! I ſhall never be ſo good a Chriſtian as my father was.

La. I ſhall never be ſo good a Chriſtian as thou art, William.

Wil. I hope you are, and pleaſe you, much better already; God has bleſſed your Worſhip with a vaſt great eſtate, and if he gives you grace to honour him with it, he has put means in your Worſhip's hands to do a great deal of good with it, an't pleaſe you.

La. But you have a better eſtate than I, William.

Wil. I an eſtate! an't pleaſe you, I am a poor labouring man; if I can get bread, by my work, for my poor children, it is all I have to hope for on this ſide eternity.

La. William! William! thou haſt an inheritance beyond this world, and I want that hope; I am very ſerious with thee, William. Thou haſt taught me more this one night, of the true happineſs of a Chriſtian's life, than ever I knew before; I muſt have more talk with thee upon this ſubject; for thou haſt been the beſt inſtructor ever I met with.

Wil. Alas! Sir, I am a ſorry inſtructor, I want help myſelf, an't pleaſe you; and ſometimes, the

Lord knows, I am hardly able to bear up under my burden; but, bleſſed be God, at other times I am comforted, that my hope is not in this life.

La. I tell thee, William, thy eſtate is better than all mine; thy treaſure is in heaven, and thy heart is there too; I would give all my eſtate to be in thy condition.

Wil. O Sir, I hope your Worſhip is in a better condition than I every way.

La. Look you, William, I am very ſerious with thee; thou knoweſt how I have been brought up, for you remember my father very well.

Wil. Yes, I do indeed; he was a good man to the poor: I was the better for him many a day; he was a worthy gentleman.

La. But, William, he never took any care of us that were his children, to teach us any thing of religion; and this is my caſe, as it is the caſe of too many gentlemen of eſtates; we are the unhappieſt creatures in the world; we are taught nothing, and we know nothing of religion, or of him that made us; it is below us, it ſeems.

Wil. It is great pity, indeed, an't pleaſe you; but I know it is ſo too often; there is young Sir Thomas——, your Worſhip's couſin, he is a pretty youth, and may make a fine gentleman; but though he is but a child, he has ſuch words in his mouth, and will ſwear ſo already, it grieves me to hear him ſometimes. It is true, his father is dead; but ſure, if my Lady knew it, ſhe would teach him better; it is pity ſo hopeful a young gentleman ſhould be ruined.

La. And who do you think ſpoil'd him?

Wil. Some wicked children, that they let him play with, I believe, or ſome looſe ſervants.

La. No, no, William, only his own father and mother; I have heard his father take him, when he was a child, and make him ſpeak lewd words, and

ſing immodeſt ſongs, when the poor child did not ſo much as know the meaning of what he ſaid, or that the words were not fit for him to ſpeak: And you talk of my Lady! why, ſhe will ſwear and curſe as faſt as her coachman: How ſhould the child learn any better?

Wil. O dear, that is a dreadful caſe indeed, an't pleaſe you! then the poor youth muſt be ruined of neceſſity; there's no remedy for him, unleſs it pleaſes God to ſingle him out by his diſtinguiſhing inviſible grace.

La. Why, his caſe, William, is my caſe, and the caſe of half the gentlemen in England: What God may do, as you ſay, by his inviſible grace, I know not; nor ſcarce know what you mean by that word; we are from our infancy given up to the devil, almoſt as directly as if we were put out to nurſe to him.

Wil. Indeed, Sir, an't pleaſe you, the gentlemen do not think much of religion; I fear it was always ſo; the ſcripture ſays, *Not many rich, not many noble, are called*, and it is *the poor of this world that are rich in faith*, James ii. 5.

La. I find it ſo indeed, William, and I find myſelf at a dreadful loſs in this very thing; I am convinced, the happineſs of man does not conſiſt in the eſtate, pleaſures, and enjoyments of life; if ſo, the poor alone would be miſerable, and the rich men only be bleſſed; but there is ſomething beyond this world, which makes up for all that is deficient here: This you have, and I have not; and ſo, William, you in your poor cottage are richer, and more happy, than I am with the whole manor.

Wil. Indeed, Sir, if in this world only we had hope, the poor would be of all men the moſt miſerable; bleſſed be the Lord, that our portion is not in this life. But, Sir, an't pleaſe you, I hope you

will not discourage yourself neither; for God has not chosen the poor only; rich men have temptations from the world, and hindrances very many; and it is hard for them to enter into the kingdom of heaven; but they are not shut out; the gate is not barr'd upon them because they are rich.

La. I know not how it is, William, nor which way to begin; but I see so many obstructions in this work, that I doubt I shall never get over it.

Wil. Do not say so, I beseech you, Sir, an't please you; the promise is made to all; and if God has given you a heart to seek him, he will *meet you and bless you;* for he has said, *Their hearts shall live that seek the Lord.* Many great and rich men have been good men; we read of good kings and good princes; and if your difficulties are great, you have great encouragements; for you that are great men, have great opportunities to honour God, and do good to his church; poor men are denied these encouragements; we can only sit still, and be patient under the weight of our sorrows, and our poverty, and look for his blessing, which alone *makes rich, and adds no sorrow to it.*

La. But tell me, William, what is the first step such a poor uneducated thing as I am should take? I see a beauty in religion, which I cannot reach; I see the happiness which thou enjoyest, William, in an humble, religious, correct life; I would give all my estate to be in thy condition; I would labour at the hedge and the ditch, as thou dost, could I have the same peace within, and be as thankful, and have such an entire confidence in God as thou hast; I see the happiness of it, but nothing of the way how to obtain it.

Wil. Alas! Sir, an't please you, you do not know my condition; I am a poor disconsolate creature; I am sometimes so lost, so dark, so overwhelm'd

with my condition, and with my diſtreſſes, that I am tempted to fear God *has forgotten to be gracious*; that I am caſt off, and left to ſink under my own burden: I am ſo unworthy, ſo forgetful of my duty, ſo eaſily let go my hold, and caſt off my confidence, that I fear often I ſhall deſpair.

La. And what do you do then, William?

Wil. Alas! Sir, I go mourning many a day, and waking many a night; but I bleſs the Lord, I always mourn after him; I always cleave to him; I am not tempted to run from him; I know I am undone, if I ſeek comfort in any other: Alas! whither elſe ſhall I go? I cry night and day, *Return, return, O Father!* and reſolve to lie at his foot; and that, *if he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him*: And bleſſed be the God of my hope, he does ſend comfort and peace, though ſometimes it is very long.

La. Well, William, and is this a diſconſolate condition? Would you change your condition with me that am the rich glutton?

Wil. O do not ſay ſo of yourſelf, an't pleaſe you; God has touched your Worſhip's heart, I perceive, with an earneſt deſire after him; you have a gracious promiſe, that would greatly encourage you, if you would but take it to yourſelf.

La. Encourage me, William! that's impoſſible: What can encourage me? What promiſe is it you talk of, that looks towards me?

Wil. Why, an't pleaſe you, I heard you ſay, you would change your condition with ſuch a poor wretch as I; you would labour at the hedge and the ditch, to have the knowledge of God and religion, and to be able to be thankful to him, and have confidence in him: this implies, that you have a *longing earneſt deſire after him*, and after the knowledge of his truth.

La. Indeed, that is true, William.

Wil. Then there are many comforting ſcriptures, which ſpeak directly to you, Sir, *viz. Bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs, for they ſhall be filled: the longing ſoul ſhall be ſatisfied:* he will *ſatisfy the deſires of all thoſe that fear him;* and the like.

La. But what muſt I do? which is the way an ignorant wretch muſt take?

Wil. Sir, an't pleaſe you, the way is plain: we muſt pray to him; prayer is the firſt duty, and prayer is the greateſt privilege we can enjoy in the world.

La. Ay, William; but there is a great deal required in prayer, that I am an utter ſtranger to: I never prayed in my life; no, nor I believe my father or grandfather before me, William! I am come of a curſed race, William, and I doubt it is entailed upon the family, like the eſtate.

Wil. O, Sir, do not ſay that: the ſcripture is plain, an't pleaſe you, that the children ſhall not be puniſhed for the fathers tranſgreſſion.

La. But then certainly they muſt not tread in their fathers ſteps, as I do exactly, William.

Wil. That's true, indeed, Sir, they muſt not tread in thoſe ſteps.

La. But what doſt thou talk then of prayer being the firſt duty? Why, if that be the firſt thing, I muſt not begin; for how can ſuch a creature as I pray to God?

Wil. As the ſpirit of God will aſſiſt thoſe, whoſe hearts are towards him, ſo we muſt pray, that we may be taught to pray.

La. Is it not a difficult thing for a man to pray to God, William, that ſcarce ever thought of God in all his life?

Wil. Well, Sir, but who do you think put thoſe thoughts into your mind, which you now have?

and who opened your eyes, Sir, to ſee a beauty in religion, as now you ſee; and touched your heart with ſuch an earneſt deſire after the ways and things of God, as you now expreſsly ſay you have? do you think this is not of God, an't pleaſe you?

La. Indeed, William, I know not; it would be a very delightful thing to me, if I thought it was ſo.

Wil. Without queſtion, Sir, it is: man can have no ſuch power; nature prompts us to evil thoughts and evil deſires, and to them only; the imagination of the thoughts of our hearts is evil, and only evil; if there are any good motions, or heavenly deſires in the heart, they are from God. Every good gift, and every perfect gift comes down from above; it is his power works them, his inviſible grace forms all holy deſires in the ſoul.

La. Well; and what do you infer from thence, William?

Wil. Why, Sir, an't pleaſe you, if God has begun a good work, he will perfect it; if he has turned your face towards him, he will lift up your heart to him; to pray to God is as natural to a convert, as to cry after the father or mother is to an infant.

La. Thou ſpeakeſt, William, with more clearneſs than ever I heard before; but it is a ſtrange thing to me to talk of praying to God: I pray! that, except juſt the common road of going to church, cannot ſay that ever I kneeled down to pray to God once in all my life! how ſhall I pray?

Wil. That's ſad indeed, an't pleaſe you! I am ſorry to hear your Worſhip ſay ſo: does any creature live, and not pray to God! O! dear! that's a ſad dreadful thing in truth! but however, Sir, do not let that hinder you now.

La. How doſt mean hinder me? what can be ſaid to hinder me doing what I have no knowledge in, no notion of, no inclination to?

Wil. O Sir, an't pleaſe you, you miſtake your own condition very much: do not diſcourage yourſelf thus; you know how to pray better than many that make much noiſe with their devotions; I ſee it plainly.

La. I pray! William; I pray! I tell thee, I never prayed in my life, as I know of.

Wil. An't pleaſe your Worſhip not to be angry with me for my plain way——

La. Prithee, William, be plain, and ſpeak freely; do not worſhip me and ſir me now; talk to me as if I were your neighbour or comrade; theſe are not things to talk of with cringes and bows: I am a wretched, contemptible, poor man; thou art a poor, rich, happy Chriſtian: talk plainly to me, William, the coarſer the better, I like it beſt; there will be no difference, William, between thee and I hereafter, but what will be on thy ſide; tell me therefore what you mean, William, by my praying?

Wil. Why, Sir, you allow me to be plain, then, I ſay, you miſtake your own condition, and thereby put off the comfort you might receive; I ſay, you do pray, and know better how to pray, than many that come to church and appear as if they prayed every day.

La. You muſt explain yourſelf, William, I do not underſtand you.

Wil. Why, Sir, thoſe earneſt deſires you have after the knowledge of God, and after the true worſhip of God, which is the ſum of religion, I ſay, thoſe earneſt deſires are really prayers in their own nature; ſincere wiſhes of the heart for grace are prayers to God for grace; prayer itſelf is nothing but thoſe wiſhes and deſires put into words, and the firſt is the eſſential part; for there may be words uſed without deſire, and that is no prayer, but a

mockery of God; but the desires of the heart may be prayers, even without the words.

La. You surprise me a little, William.

Wil. Besides, Sir, an't please you, those earnest desires you have after religion, and after the knowledge of God, will force you to pray first or last, in a verbal prayer; they will break out like a flame that cannot be with-held; your heart will pray, when you know not of it: praying to God, Sir, is the first thing a sense of religion dictates, as a child crieth as soon as it is born.

La. Alas! William, I know nothing of it; I am such an unaccountable wretch, God knows, I know nothing what belongs to praying, not I; thou hast let me see farther into it, by that thou hast said just now, than ever I saw or heard before.

Wil. Why, look ye now, an't please you, I told you it would break out, when you knew not of it, and you would pray to God before you were aware. Did you not pray just now?

La. Pray! Why, what did I say? I said, I know nothing of prayer.

Wil. Nay, that was not all. What is the meaning of those words, Alas, William! and whence came that sigh when you called yourself that hard name? and what was the sense of your soul but this, God be merciful to me, and teach me to pray, for alas! I know nothing what belongs to praying? Was not all this praying?

La. Indeed, William, my heart had such a kind of meaning; but I cannot form the thought into words, no not in my very soul.

Wil. It is all one, Sir; God that moves the soul, certainly hears his own motion; how should he but hear it? is it not his own working? The preparation of the heart, and the answer of the tongue, is of the Lord. He will hear every sincere desire which

he forms in your ſoul, whether it be conceived into words or no; for it is the voice of his own Spirit and grace.

La. Thou art a comforting preacher, William: I don't wonder you enjoy ſuch a ſhining beam of light in your own ſoul, when you have ſuch a ſenſe of things as this; you ſhall be my inſtructor, William: I may call you father rather; for thou art better to me than ten fathers.

Wil. O Sir, an't pleaſe you, my diſcomforts are very great, and the beam you ſpeak of is very dim in me. Do not ſpeak ſuch things of me; it makes me very ſad, for I know my own darkneſs; I am a poor deſpiſed creature.

La. Well, but God may make you an inſtrument of good to me, or to any one he pleaſes: I never had thus much inſtruction in my life, William; you will not be backward to do good I hope, if it be thus caſt in your way.

Wil. I will be very glad, if ſuch a worm as I am ſhould be an inſtrument, in God's hand, to comfort or inform your Worſhip; and ſhall praiſe God for this occaſion as long as I live; and indeed I rejoice, an't pleaſe you, to ſee your Worſhip inquiring after theſe things; I pray God increaſe the knowledge of himſelf in your mind, and comfort you with the hope of his preſence and bleſſing.

La. Amen, I thank you, William.

Wil. Look you now, Sir, an't pleaſe you, did you not pray then, again?

La. I joined with you, William; I don't know: but if that be praying, I think I did pray.

Wil. Thus God will move your heart to pray to him. And I beſeech your Worſhip to read the ſcriptures; read them much and ſeriouſly; and pray. Sir, obſerve this one thing, when you read, which I have experienced often, and very comfortably;

and I dare ſay, you and every one that reads the word of God, with deſire of a bleſſing, will experience the like, *viz.* When you are reading, and come to any place that touches you, and that your mind is affected with, you ſhall find, even whether you will or no, your heart will every now and then lift itſelf up thus, Lord! make good this word to me! Lord! draw my heart thus to thee! Lord! help me thus to ſeek thee, and the like: and be not afraid to call that praying, for mental petition is prayer as well as words; and is, perhaps, the beſt moved prayer, and the beſt expreſſed in the world.

La. You will perſuade me, William, that I both have prayed already, and ſhall again, whether I will or no, and whether I know any thing of it or no, and that I want no teaching.

Wil. Pray, Sir, does a child want to be taught to cry?

La. Will that ſimile hold, William?

Wil. Indeed it will, Sir. Read the ſcripture; if God's word reaches your heart, you will not need to be taught to pray.

La. I told you, William, you hardly knew who you were talking to. You talk of my reading the ſcripture; why, I'll tell thee, William, I han't a Bible in the world, and never had one in my life: There's the manor-houſe yonder; I queſtion whether God was ever prayed to in it, or his name ever mentioned there, except profanely, or perhaps to ſwear by it, ſince it was built. Why, you know as well as I, what a family it was that lived in it, when my father purchaſed it. They were as much ſtrangers to religion, William, as thou art to Greek and Hebrew; and ours were but little better, that came after them.

Wil. I fear indeed, an't pleaſe your Worſhip, it was ſo. Poor gentlemen! they lived badly, indeed,

very badly. Alas! gentlemen muſt not be told of it by us poor men; but they were a ſad wicked family, I remember it well.

La. But, William, thou canſt lend me a Bible, can'ſt thou not? and I'll read it all over while I ſtay in the country.

Wil. Yes, an't pleaſe your Worſhip, I'll lend you a Bible; I'll bring it in the morning.

La. Do, William, and come and ſtay with me to-morrow; I'll make thee amends for thy day's work, and there's ſomething for thy good advice, and coming ſo far with me.

[He gives him ſome money, and ſends him back again.]

Wil. Thank your Worſhip.

[They were now come to the manor-houſe, and he was loath to detain him, becauſe it was too late, and becauſe he was ſo affected with the diſcourſe they had had, that he wanted very much to be alone.

As ſoon as he came into his own houſe, he locked himſelf into a parlour, and began to conſider, with great ſeriouſneſs all theſe things, and eſpecially what the poor man had ſaid to him about praying to God; and as his thoughts were intent upon the meaning of prayer, the nature of it, and the advantages of it, at every turn of theſe thoughts he found a ſecret kind of hint like a voice in him, not a voice to him, O that I could pray! O, if I could but pray as that poor man does! How happy ſhould I be, if I could but pray to God! and the like. He was not aware of theſe movements; they ſeemed to be wrought in his affections perfectly involuntarily and ſudden; and they paſſed over without being noticed or obſerved, even by himſelf, till after a good while they returned ſtronger and more frequent

upon him, ſo that he not only perceived it, but remembered how often his heart had thrown out thoſe expreſſions; when on a ſudden the poor man's words came into his mind with ſuch a force, as if the man himſelf had been there: Why, this was praying; certainly I have been praying all this while, and knew it not.

Upon this reflection, it was impoſſible for him to expreſs, as he ſaid afterwards, what a ſtrange rapture of joy poſſeſſed his mind, and how his heart was turned within him; then he fell into the ſame ſacred ejaculations of another kind, *viz.* of admiration, praiſes, thankſgiving, and mere aſtoniſhment; but ſtill without ſpeaking otherwiſe than a kind of mental voice, ſounding or injecting words into his mind, ſuch as theſe, Lord! ſhall I be brought to pray to God! I that have never been told ſo much as how to mention his name! I that have never known any thing of God, or myſelf! or have been taught any thing of my duty to him! ſhall I be taught to pray! and taught by who! by this poor deſpicable creature, that at another time I would not have ſpoken to, if he had made me twenty bows and ſcrapes! His tongue then was let looſe, and he cried out, Bleſſed be God that ever I came near that poor man.

He continued all that evening filled with comforting reflections, and with a kind of inward peace and ſatisfaction; which as he had never known before, ſo he knew not how to deſcribe or relate it, or indeed how to manage it. In the morning he found the ſame meditation and the ſame lightneſs upon his ſpirits returned, and he remembered what the poor man had prayed for, for him, *viz.* That he might be comforted with the hopes of the preſence and bleſſing of God, to which his heart had ſo readily ſaid Amen. And now he longed for the poor man's coming with the Bible.

The poor man was likewiſe mightily affected with his caſe, conſidering him a young gentleman of ſuch a family and fortune; and who was ſo far above him, as that, though he was his landlord, he durſt never offer to ſpeak to him in his life, but with the greateſt ſubmiſſion and diſtance: how he ſhould come to call him out, and to talk to him, of ſuch things eſpecially, and in ſo ſerious a manner.

He then reflected, with a ſerious joy, that this young gentleman ſhould be thus touched with a ſolid ſenſe of religion and good things; for it was eaſy to ſee, that it was not a ſlight or an inſincere work upon his mind. It rejoiced his heart, that the heir of the eſtate ſhould be thus likely to prove a good man; and it preſently occurred to his thoughts, how great a bleſſing ſuch a gentleman might be to the country, to the poor, and uninſtructed people round him: as well by reforming their manners, and reſtraining their vices, as perhaps by bringing religion to be accepted and received among them by his example.

Theſe were ſome of the thoughts he came along with, and he prayed to God, as he walked, very earneſtly, that he might be made an inſtrument to bring the ſoul of this gentleman to the knowledge of God, and to bow at the footſtool of his Redeemer, as a true penitent.

His prayers were not in vain. Prayer put up from ſuch a principle, and with ſuch a ſpirit, ſeldom is made in vain.

He came to the gentleman, while he was in bed; for he had given orders to his ſervants to bring him up to his chamber; there he delivered him the Bible, and told him he hoped he would find in it both encouragement and direction in the great work which he was going about, and that God would bleſs it to

him, and would ſupply by his grace all the wants of early inſtruction, which he had ſo much complained of.

He received the poor man with a glad heart, made him ſit down by him, and told him, God had made him the inſtrument of ſo much good to him, that he could not part with him any more while he ſtaid in the country.

William, ſays he, God has made you a father to me, and I'll be a father to you and your family; you ſhall go home no more to that poor cottage, you ſhall have ſomething elſe to be thankful to God for than bread and water.

Wil. An't pleaſe your Worſhip, I have much more to be thankful for than that already; but if God has been pleaſed to aſſiſt me to do you good in this great buſineſs of bringing ſuch a ſoul as yours to the knowledge of himſelf, I ſhall have cauſe to praiſe him, beyond all that ever I had before.

La. Well, William, I have ſent for your wife and children; they ſhall be my care now, not yours; I'll provide a houſe for you.

[He gave him a houſe and a little farm rent-free, to live on, and made him his bailiff, and receiver of the rents of the manor.]

Wil. Your Worſhip will be a father to me and my family indeed then: I can never deſerve ſo much at your hands; an't pleaſe you, I am very willing to work ſtill for my bread, I thank your Worſhip.

La. No, William, you ſhall never work any more for your bread; you have been thankful for a little, William; I heard you laſt night, when you were at prayer in your family, and giving thanks to God for the plenty you enjoyed. Poor William! you do not know how it affected me, that never gave God thanks in my life; now you ſhall be thankful for better things.

Wil. I ſhall be greatly bound to be thankful to your Worſhip too, an't pleaſe you.

La. No, William, do not thank me, thank God ſtill.

Wil. An' your Worſhip mend my condition, I fear my thankfulneſs to God ſhould abate: when I lived ſo near miſery and diſtreſs, it made me more ſenſible of God's goodneſs in keeping me out of it, than I may, I doubt, when I am full.

La. I don't think you will ever be unthankful, William, that could be ſo full of a ſenſe of God's mercy, even in the extremeſt poverty. But come, William, I ſhall leave that; I have ordered my ſteward both to provide for, and employ you, and I ſhall ſay no more of that now: but my buſineſs now is of another nature: and firſt, I muſt tell you, how I have been employed ſince I left you laſt night.

[Here he gave the poor man an account of himſelf, and of his reflections upon what he had ſaid to him, and how inſenſibly he had received ſecret comfort, as above; and he found tears run down the poor man's cheeks, all the while he was talking to him, for joy.]

Wil. O Sir! give God the praiſe, this is all his own work; and I hope your comfort ſhall increaſe and continue: did I not tell you, Sir, God would teach you to pray?

La. But now, William, what ſhall I do with this book?

Wil. Read it, Sir, an't pleaſe you, and you will pray over it whether you will or no.

La. But I am ſtill ignorant; I have no miniſter near me to explain it to me.

Wil. The Spirit of God will expound his own word to you.

La. Well, William, you ſhall be my miniſter: Come, ſit down by me, and read in it.

Wil. Alas! I am a ſorry creature to be a teacher, Sir; but, an't pleaſe you, I have turned down ſome places, which I thought of, to ſhew your Worſhip for your firſt reading.

La. That's what I wanted, William.

Wil. An't pleaſe you, here's a text which tells you what is the whole deſign of a written goſpel: for what end the life of our bleſſed Redeemer was laid down, and his works and doctrine were publiſhed to the world; and this ſeems to be the firſt thing we ſhould know of the ſcriptures: for indeed it is the ſum and ſubſtance of them.

La. Let me ſee it, William.

Wil. [Here it is, Sir: *Theſe things are written, that ye might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through his name*, John xx. 31.

La. That is very comprehenſive indeed, William.

Wil. And here is another paſſage I folded down, leſt you ſhould aſk, how you ſhould do to believe; it is in Mark ix. 24. it is a ſtory of a man who brings his child to our Lord to be healed, when poſſeſſed of an evil ſpirit: Our Lord aſks him, if he could believe? *If thou can'ſt believe, all things are poſſible to him that believeth;* and ver 24. *The father cried out with tears, Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief.*

[William looks full in his face, whilſt he repeated the words.]

La. What do you look at me for, William?

Wil. O Sir! I ſaw your very heart; I know you prayed: I know you ſaid Amen in your very ſoul to that word: Glory be to the grace of God, and to the word of God for you; the ſcripture, read with ſuch a heart as yours now is, will ſoon teach you all that you want to know, and all that you want to do.

[The poor gentleman was overcome with his words, and could not ſpeak for a good while; tears came out of his eyes, and at laſt he burſts out thus; Lord! what a creature have I been, that have lived without the teachings of the ſcripture all my days!

Thus far this happy poor man was made an inſtrument to the reſtoring this gentleman, and bringing him to the knowledge of God, and a ſenſe of religion; and in a word, to be a moſt ſincere Chriſtian. We ſhall hear farther of him, after the next dialogue.]

DIALOGUE III.

WE muſt now go back to the family which we began with: the father of the young ladies was gone into the country to viſit his ſiſter, who was newly become a widow; little thinking, whatever his eldeſt daughter had ſaid to him, that his youngeſt daughter would make ſuch ſhort work with her lover in his abſence, and that ſhe would quite put an end to his courtſhip all at one blow, as ſhe had done before he came home again.

He ſpent ſome little time at his ſiſter's, to comfort her and aſſiſt her in her affairs after the loſs of her huſband; and particularly, becauſe her eldeſt ſon being of age, and juſt now upon marrying, ſhe intended to remove; the houſe, which was the ſeat of the family, being to be fitted up for her new daughter-in-law: Upon theſe circumſtances he began the following diſcourſe with his ſiſter.

Bro. Well, pray, ſiſter, what kind of a lady has my nephew got? Is he well married?

Si. Truly, brother, I can hardly tell how to anſwer you that queſtion; I believe every body will be better pleaſed than I.

Bro. Why, ſiſter, what is the cauſe, pray, that you are ſo difficult?

Si. O brother! the main difficulty that has made me all my days the moſt miſerable of all women.

Bro. What! religion, I warrant you; you would have had him have married a nun?

Si. Nay, I don't know why I ſhould deſire a religious woman to come into the family.

Bro. I never ſaw the like of you, ſiſter, you are always a-complaining; you have had one of the beſt-humoured, goodeſt-conditioned, merrieſt fellows in the world for this five and twenty years, and yet you call yourſelf a miſerable woman: what could you aſk in a huſband, that you had not in Sir James?

Si. Dear brother, is this a time for me to tell you what I wanted in Sir James, when he is in his grave? I have wanted nothing in him that a woman could deſire in a huſband; he was rich in his eſtate, a lovely, complete, handſome gentleman in his perſon, and held it to the laſt; he was the beſt humoured man that ever woman had, and kind, as a huſband, to the laſt degree: I never ſaw him in a paſſion in my life; he was a man of good ſenſe and good learning; a man of honour, good breeding, and good manners; none went beyond him; all the country knows it, and lov'd him for it.

Bro. Very well; and yet my ſiſter was a miſerable woman! Would not any man laugh at you? I think, ſiſter, if ever you were a miſerable woman, it is now, becauſe you have loſt him.

Si. Well, that's true too; I am ſo now, many ways, and ſome perhaps that you do not think of, brother.

Bro I know what you mean again; I warrant you have been whining over him, to think what is become of him now: prithee what's that to you, or I? What can you, by your concern for him, do in

that caſe, one way or other? can't you leave him to God's mercy now he's gone!

Si. Dear brother, it is in vain to anſwer you; I muſt leave him to God's mercy, and ſo we muſt leave ourſelves: but do you think, it is not an afflicting, dreadful thing to me, that knows how he lived, and how he died, to reflect upon his condition, if I had any love for him!

Bro. Why, how did he live? He lived like a gentleman, as he was.

Si. That's true; and that, as times go, brother, is to live like a Heathen; you know well enough what a life I have had with him on that only account; you know, he was ſo far from having any ſenſe of religion, or of his Maker, on his mind, that he made a jeſt and a mock of it all his days, even to the laſt.

Bro. I know he did not trouble himſelf much about it.

Si. Nay, he not only did not himſelf, but he did not really love to have any body about him religious. I have known many gentlemen that have had no religion themſelves, yet value it in others, and value and reverence good men: but he thought all people hypocrites that talked of any thing religious, and could not abide to ſee any appearance of it in the houſe. It was the only thing we had any difference about all our days.

Bro. And I think you was a great fool to have any difference with him about that. Could not you have kept your religion to yourſelf, and have let him alone, to be as merry and as frolicſome as he would without it?

Si. Nay, I was obliged to do that, you may be ſure: you know it well enough.

Bro. Yes, yes, I know he ſerved you many a merry prank about your religious doings; ſuch as put-

ting every now and then a ballad in your prayer-book or pſalm-book; and I think he put the ſtory of Tom Thumb once in one of Dr Tillotſon's ſermons.

Si. No; it was two leaves out of Don Quixote. He did a great many ſuch things as thoſe to me.

Bro. But they were all frolics; there was nothing of paſſion or ill nature in them. Did he not write ſomething in the childrens ſpelling-book once, and make them get it without book, inſtead of the leſſon you had ſet them?

Si. Yes, yes, he play'd me a thouſand tricks that way.

Bro. I think once he paſſed a receipt to make a tanzey or a cake juſt next to one of the queſtions of the catechiſm, where your daughter's leſſon was.

Si. Ay, ay; and every now and then he would paſte a ſingle printed word, that he cut out of ſome other book, juſt over another word, in their books, ſo cunningly, that they could not perceive it, and make them read nonſenſe.

Bro. Why, what harm was there in all that?

Si. Why, it ſhewed his general contempt of good things, and making a mock of them, otherwiſe the thing was not of ſo much value.

Bro. Well, and wherein was you miſerable, pray, in all this? I don't underſtand you in that at all.

Si. Why, in this, that he was not at all a religious man.

Bro. But what was that to you, ſtill?

Si. Why, firſt, brother, there was all family-religion loſt at one blow. There could not be ſo much as the appearance of worſhipping or acknowledging the God that made us: nay, we ſcarce aſked him leave to eat our meat, but in ſecret, as if we were aſhamed of it. Sir James never ſo much as ſaid grace, or gave thanks at table in his life, that I remember.

Bro. And they that do, make it nothing but a ceremony, and do it for faſhion's-ſake, not that they think it ſignifies any thing.

Si. Well, let them do it for faſhion-ſake then, if they will, but let them do it. It is the moſt rational thing in the world, while we own that God gives us our meat, that we ſhould aſk him leave to eat it, and thank him for it when we have done. But alas! this is but a ſmall part of the ill conſequences of an irreligious family.

Bro. Well, what more is there? for this is nothing but what is in thouſands of families, who pretend to religion on all ſides.

Si. Why, all relative religion was loſt too.

Bro. Relative religion! ſiſter, what do you mean by that?

Si. Why, *1ſt*, I mean by it that religion which ought to be between a man and his wife; ſuch as, comforting, encouraging, and directing one another, helping one another on in the way to heaven; aſſiſting one another in Chriſtian duties, praying with and for one another, and much more which I could name, and which, without doubt, paſſes to their mutual comfort and delight, between a man and his wife, where they are mutually agreed in worſhipping and ſerving God, and walking on in the happy courſe of a religious life. All this has been loſt, and it has been a ſad loſs to me, brother. We have all need of helps; and it is not every one that conſiders, or indeed that knows, what help, what comfort, what ſupport, a religious huſband and wife are or may be to one another. This, I ſay, has been a ſad loſs to me, I aſſure you.

Bro. Theſe are nice things; but, methinks, if you could not have theſe helps from your huſband, you might find them in other things, ſuch as books,

miniſters, &c. it need not be called ſuch a loſs neither.

Si. It is ſuch a loſs, brother, that if I were to live my days over again, I would not marry a man that made no profeſſion of religion; no! though he had ten thouſand pounds a-year, and I had but a hundred pounds to my portion; nay, I think I would work for my bread rather.

Bro. You lay a mighty ſtreſs upon theſe things.

Si. Every body, brother, that has any ſenſe of the bleſſing of a religious family, muſt do ſo. Pray, if the honouring and ſerving God be our wiſdom, our duty, our felicity in this world, and our way to the next, what comfort, what happineſs can there be, where theſe are wanting in the head of the family?

Bro. It is better, to be ſure, where they may be had; but to lay all the happineſs of life upon it, as if a man or a woman could not be religious by themſelves, without they were ſo both together, I do not ſee that; I think you carry it too far.

Si. I'll convince you that I do not carry it too far at all; I do not ſay a man or a woman may not be religious by themſelves, though the huſband or wife be not ſo; but I ſay, all the help and comfort of relative religion is loſt; the benefit and value of which none knows, but they that enjoy it, or feel the want of it; but there is another loſs which I have not named, and which my heart bleeds in the ſenſe of every day.

Bro. What's that, I wonder?

Si. Why, children! brother, children! you ſee I have five children: What dreadful work has this want of family-religion made among my poor children!

Bro. Why, Sir James did not hinder your inſtructing your children.

Si. Did he not? it is true he did not when they were little; but has he not, by example and want of reſtraint, encouraged all manner of levity, vanity, folly, nay, and even vice itſelf in them? Do you think children, thus let looſe to humour their young inclinations, and to the full ſwing of their pleaſures, would not ſoon ſnatch themſelves out of the arms of their mother, and deliver themſelves from the importunities of one that had no other authority with them than that of affection?

Bro. Why, truly, there is ſomething in that; but I do not ſee that your children are much the worſe; there is your eldeſt ſon, Sir James that is now; he is a pretty young gentleman; I hear a very good character of him.

Si. Why, truly, brother, as times go now with gentlemen, we may be thankful neither he nor his brother are debauched or vitious; and I am thankful for it. They have good characters for modeſt pretty gentlemen, as you ſay: But ſtill, brother, the main thing is wanting. I cannot be partial to them, though they are my own; there is not the leaſt ſenſe or notion of religion in them. They cannot ſay they have no knowledge of it; I took care to deprive them of that excuſe, as early as they knew any thing: but it goes no farther; my eldeſt ſon will tell me ſometimes, he has as much religion as a gentleman of a thouſand a-year ſhould have; and his brother tells me, if I would have had him have any religion, I ſhould have kept our pariſh-living for him, and bred him a parſon.

Bro. They are very merry with you then, I find, upon that ſubject.

Si. It is a dreadful jeſt to me, brother; I am far from taking it merrily; you know I was otherwiſe brought up; our father and mother were another ſort of people; they united their very ſouls in the

work of God; they joined in every good thing with the utmoſt affection; they loved the ſouls as well as the bodies of us their children. The family was a houſe of chearful devotion; God was ſerved night and day; and, in a word, as they lived, ſo they died, they dropped comfortably off, and went, as it were, hand in hand to heaven.

Bro. And yet, ſiſter, you ſee, we that were their children were not all alike. There is our brother Jack, and our ſiſter Betty and Sarah, what can be ſaid about them? Pray what religion are they of?

Si. I'll tell you what can be ſaid, and that will ſtick cloſe to them one time or other, *viz.* if they are loſt, it is not for want of good inſtruction, or good example; they cannot blame father or mother; it has been all their own. Parents may beg grace for their children, but they cannot give it them; they may teach their children good things, but they cannot make them learn; that is the work of God, and parents muſt ſubmit it to him. But when parents do nothing; nay, rather, by example and encouragement, lead their children into wickedneſs, what a dreadful thing is that!

Bro. Well, but our two ſiſters were not led into wickedneſs; and yet, as I ſaid, they value religion as little as any body.

Si. Ay, brother, I can tell you how my ſiſters were both ruined; for they were not ſo educated.

Bro. What do you mean by ruined? they are not ruined, I hope.

Si. I mean as to their principles, brother, which I think is the worſt ſort of ruin; they were ruined by marrying profligate irreligious huſbands.

Bro. I don't know what you mean by profligate; I think they are both very well married.

Si. Yes, as you call well married, and that I call being undone.

Bro. And pray what has ruined Jack? for he is as graceleſs a wretch almoſt as your Sir James was.

Si. Truly, brother, juſt the other extreme: he has a wild, giddy, playhouſe-bred wife; full of wit, and void of grace, that never had any religion, nor knew what the meaning of it was; this has ruined him. My brother was a ſober, well-taught, well-inclined young man as could be deſired; but getting ſuch a temper at his elbow, inſtead of a wife to help him on to heaven, ſhe has led him hood-winked to the gates of hell, and goes chearfully along with him; a ſad inſtance, brother, of the want of family-religion!

Bro. Well, but what's all this to what we are upon, of parents leading their children into wickedneſs? he was not led ſo by his parents.

Si. But you ſee his children are.

Bro. I cannot ſay that; few parents, though they are bad themſelves, will prompt their children to be ſo too: that's what I have ſeldom ſeen.

Si. Well, that has been the caſe of my family; and that is it that has broke my heart, and gives me cauſe to ſay, I have been the moſt miſerable woman alive.

Bro. But you have this comfort ſtill, that you have not been the occaſion of it.

Si. That's true; but even that does not leſſen the grief of ſeeing my children loſt and ruined before my face, and their own father be the inſtrument of it.

Bro. They cannot be ſaid to be ruined: they are very fine gentlemen, I aſſure you.

Si. They are ruined as to the beſt qualification of a gentleman.

Bro. I warrant you, they do not think ſo, ſiſter: religion makes us good Chriſtians, that is confeſſed; but I do not ſee it makes a fine gentleman. What is more frequent, than to ſee religion make men cyni-

cal and ſour in their tempers, moroſe and ſurly in their converſation? They think themſelves above the practice of good manners or good humour.

Si. This is all by the miſtake of the thing; it is want of religion that makes men thus. It is in good breeding as it is in philoſophy; a little philoſophy, a little learning, makes a man an Atheiſt; a great deal brings him back, and makes him a Chriſtian: ſo a little religion makes a man churl, but a great deal teaches him to know himſelf, and be a gentleman. When good principles join with good manners, how ſhould they but illuſtrate the education, and ſet off the breeding of a man of quality? As it is a miſtake to ſay, that jewels ſhould be worn by none but homely women, it is juſt the contrary; ſo religion adorns education, as jewels give real beauty a double luſtre.

Bro. Your notions are delicate. You are very nice, it ſeems, in theſe things, ſiſter; though, I muſt confeſs, I am of your mind, when I conſider it well.

Si. Let the ſcripture be judge, whether the rules of life dictated by the apoſtles to the Chriſtian churches, were not ſuch, as not only agree well with that of a gentleman, but indeed with that, without which no man can be a gentleman; if you look almoſt through all the epiſtles in the New Teſtament, you will find it ſo; I'll name you a few.

Phil. i. 9. 10. *That your love may abound in knowledge and all judgment.*——There's wiſdom and learning.

That ye may approve things that are excellent.—— There's ſolid judgment.

That ye may be ſincere, and without offence.—— There's the honeſty and open-heartedneſs of a true gentleman.

1 Pet. *Love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.*—

There's the charity, the beneficence, and the good breeding of a gentleman.

Col. iii. 12. *Put on bowels of mercy, kindneſs, humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs*, &c. ——Who can be a gentleman without theſe?

Col. iv. 8. *Whatſoever things are honeſt, juſt, pure, lovely, and of good report, think of theſe things* —— What think you now? Can the practice of theſe things dishonour a gentleman? or do they honour and illuſtrate, and indeed make a gentleman?

Phil. ii. 3. *In lowlineſs of mind let each eſteem others better than themſelves.*——What becomes a gentleman more than ſuch humility?

I could name you many other. Will any man that reads theſe rules ſay, they are not ſuitable to a gentleman? No, brother, it ſhall ever be a rule to me, that the only complete man upon earth is a religious gentleman.

Bro. Why, you are wrapt up in theſe notions, ſiſter; I fancy you have been documenting my daughter; I am afraid of it, I aſſure you; ſhe has got juſt the ſame things in her noddle, and ſhe has carried her ſcruples to ſuch a length, that ſhe had like to have refuſed the beſt match that ever will be offered to her, as long as ſhe lives; but I believe I rattled her out of it, when I came away.

Si. I am perhaps the fuller of it, becauſe it has been the ruin of my family, and of my children; and, I think, if ever poor woman was unhappy with a gentleman that had not one bad quality in him, it was I; Sir James, as I told you, was ſuch a man, for every thing elſe, as there are few ſuch in the world; but he hated religion, and that has ruined us all.

Bro. You would make any one laugh to hear you talk of being ruined; why, are you not left happy, eaſy, and pleaſant? Is not your eldeſt ſon a baronet,

and has 1400 l. a-year? Is not your ſecond ſon very well provided for? Have not your daughters 5000 l. a piece fortune left them? And are not you left ſo rich, you know not what to do with it all!

Si. I do not ſpeak of ruin as you underſtand it, brother; I think a family without religion is a family ruined, and that in the worſt ſenſe, that ruin can be underſtood in; if I were to marry again, I would not marry the beſt Duke in the nation, that would not endeavour to carry me to heaven, and to go there himſelf. The command of the ſcripture is plain in it, *Be not unequally yoked*, 2 Cor. vi. 14. How ſhall a huſband that profeſſes no religion, dwell with a wife *according to knowledge?* 1 Pet. iii. 7. and what is the reaſon the apoſtle gives for this Chriſtian rule in marrying, but this, *That your prayers be not hindered?*

Bro. Why, Sir James did not hinder your prayers, ſiſter.

Si. Did he not? Sir James is in his grave, and it is not my part to ſay what he did; but it is the mutual prayers of huſband and wife together that is meant in that ſcripture. Do you think Sir James prayed with his wife?

Bro. No, I believe, he did not indeed, nor with any body elſe.

Si. And do you think that is the life of a Chriſtian, or the manner of a Chriſtian family, brother? You and I were not bred up ſo, and yet our father was a gentleman, and wanted neither family nor fortune equal to any of them. Sir James is in his grave, and I have no more to ſay of that; but if I were as young as I was when I married him, and were to chuſe again, I would not marry the beſt nobleman in the nation, if he was not a religious man; all enjoyments in the world are nothing without it, unleſs I reſolved to caſt off all religion too; and where would that end?

Bro. This is just my daughter again.

Si. Besides, brother, consider another thing: how many young women and young men too, who have been religiously bred, has this way of marrying been a snare to? that when they come to husbands with no religion, or to giddy, loose, profane wives, they drop all their own principles, and become empty of all religion too at last. You know how it has been with our brothers and sisters, as I hinted to you before.

Bro. There is no arguing with you, sister, who have had so much experience of it: but I tell my daughter, that perhaps she may convert her husband.

Si. I don't know my niece's case, and so I can say little to it; but if this be it, that she refuses a man for his being of no religion, she is in the right; she is a good religious child herself: My sister educated all your children very well, and if she marries a gentleman, as the times go now, that thinks religion below him, and unbecoming, as most of them do, she is undone.

Bro. So she says, and has just your arguments; that made me say, you had been documenting her.

Si. No, indeed, brother, not I; but I'll tell you what, I have been a *memento* to the family; and don't doubt but my sister might shew them the danger of it, by their aunt's example. I pray God they may take warning. I know she was not wanting to them in her instruction, and in cautioning them against every thing that was hurtful; and if she forgot this of cautioning them never to marry a man of no religion, then she was not the wise woman I took her for.

Bro. I know not who has cautioned her, nor who has instructed her; but if I had not took it up very warmly, she had ruined herself with her nicety. I'll tell you how it is.

[Here he tells her the whole ſtory of his daughter and the gentleman, to the time of his coming from home, he not knowing what had happened ſince.]

Si. Well, brother, you will allow me to be free with you; I muſt needs ſay I think you are in the wrong.

Bro. Yes, yes; I expected that from you.

Si. I ſpeak from my experience, brother; I would not force a child's inclination, in ſuch a caſe, for the world.

Bro. What do you mean by inclination? She forces her own inclination; for her ſiſter ſays, ſhe loves the gentleman, and has owned it; and yet, upon this ſimple nicety, ſhe pretended to croſs herſelf, affront the gentleman, and diſoblige her father.

Si. And will not all that convince you then, that ſhe acts by ſtrength of judgment, and upon principles of conſcience? If it be as you ſay, it is the nobleſt reſolution that ever I heard of, ſince the ſtory of St Catherine.

Bro. Don't tell me of your noble reſolutions, and your fine principles; it is a firſt principle, an original command of God, that children ſhould obey their parents.

Si. Ay, brother, where the parent commands nothing that claſhes with the laws of God; but then, brother, our authority ceaſes.

Bro. But I am ſure this match is for her advantage, and I'll make her have him

Si. That's a ſevere reſolution, and if it be againſt her conſcience, you may fail in all you reſolve upon; beſides, it is evident you ought not to reſolve ſo.

Bro. What! am not I her father? has it not been always the right of fathers to give their daughters in marriage? nay, to bargain for them, even with-

out their knowledge? did not Caleb promiſe his daughter Achſah in marriage to him that ſhould ſmite Kirjathſepher, not knowing who it ſhould be, or whether the girl ſhould like him or no? and are there not many ſuch inſtances in the ſcripture?

Si. All this is true, brother: but I do not think the laws of God or man give parents that authority now.

Bro. Then you will allow my daughters to marry who they pleaſe, without putting any weight upon my conſent one way or t'other: would you give your daughters that liberty?

Si. No, brother, you wrong me; but there is a great difference between your negative authority and your poſitive authority, in the caſe of a daughter: as there is a great difference between your authority in the marriage of a daughter and the marriage of a ſon.

Bro. I know my lady ſiſter is a nice civilian: pray explain yourſelf.

Si. I can take all your banters patiently, brother, and I will explain myſelf, contradict me if you can: I diſtinguiſh them thus: If your daughter deſires to marry any perſon you do not like, I grant that you have power by the law of God to forbid her poſitively: the ſcripture is plain, you have power to diſſolve even a vow or promiſe of hers, to marry or not to marry at all. But if your daughter is not willing to marry one you may like, I do not think you have the ſame right to command; for you might then command her to marry a perſon ſhe may have an abhorrence of, and an averſion to, which could not be; the very laws of matrimony forbid it; ſhe could not repeat the office of matrimony at her marriage, *viz.* to love and honour him: and to promiſe what ſhe knew at the ſame time would be impoſſible for her to perform, would be

to perjure herſelf, (for the marriage-promiſe is a ſolemn oath), and to deceive her huſband in the groſſeſt manner; neither of which would be lawful for her to do.

Bro. Well, well, for all your fine harangue, I have made her do it.

Si. Are they married then, brother?

Bro. No; but they ſhall, as ſoon as I go home.

Si. I wiſh her well; ſhe is a child that deſerves very well, I am ſure; ſhe is a ſerous, ſenſible, religious child, and will be an extraordinary woman; but if you force her to marry, as you ſay you will, remember my words, brother, you will make her miſerable, as I have been.

Bro. Yes, yes, ſo ſhe will; juſt ſo miſerable; ſhe will have a good huſband, and about 2000l. a-year eſtate; a very miſerable condition truly!

Si. All that is nothing; nor will it leſſen the miſery at all to a good woman; I am ſure ſhe had better go to ſervice, or marry a good, ſober, religious ſhoemaker, and I would do ſo myſelf, if I had my choice to make again: therefore I ſay it again, dear brother, remember my words; if you do it, you make her miſerable, and will repent it.

Bro. Nay, nay, I am not ſo poſitive neither; I would not ruin my child, you may be ſure; but I ſhall ſee when I go home.

Si. Pray let me hear how it goes, when you go home.

Bro. So you ſhall, I promiſe you.

[After this diſcourſe he ſtaid but two or three days with his ſiſter, and then went home: when he came home, to be ſure the firſt queſtion he aſked of his eldeſt daughter was, how Mr —— did? and if he was in the houſe?]

Da. In the houſe? no, Sir, I think not.

Fa. Why, you think not? when was he here?

Da. Never, Sir, ſince the evening after you went away.

Fa. Why, ſhe has not ſerved me ſo, has ſhe!

Da. Served you, Sir! nay, it is he has ſerved you ſo, for he ſaid, the laſt time he was here, he would wait on her again; but he has never been here ſince.

Fa. Then ſhe muſt have uſed him very ill, I am ſure, he had never done ſo elſe; where is ſhe? call her down.

Da. Sir, my ſiſter is gone to my aunt——'s at Hampſtead.

Fa. Very well; finely managed I aſſure you! well; I'll manage her, and all of you, if this be the way I am to be uſed. [He is in a great paſſion.]

Da I believe there is nothing done to uſe you ill, Sir, or to provoke you in the leaſt.

Fa. What is ſhe gone out of the houſe then for?

Da. Sir, you are ſo angry with her, when you talk with her, that you fright her: I was afraid, laſt time you talked to her, you would have thrown her into fits; and ſo we really all adviſed her to go home with my aunt laſt week, when ſhe was in town, and ſtay there, till we could ſee what you will pleaſe to have her do.

Fa. Do! ſhe knows what I expected ſhe ſhould do.

Da. As to marrying Mr ——, Sir, that ſhe can never do; and ſhe has talked it to him ſo handſomely, that, Sir, I aſſure you, he ſaid himſelf he could not anſwer her objections; that ſhe had reaſon for what ſhe did, and he could not urge it any farther.

Fa. Why, did not you ſay he promiſed to come again?

Da. Yes, he did ſay he would wait on her again; but he is gone into the conntry, I hear.

Fa. Well, I'll ſay no more, till he comes again, then.

Da. Nay, if he had come again, ſhe had reſolved, ſhe would not have ſeen him.

Fa. Say you ſo! I'll be as poſitive as ſhe; if ſhe will ſee him no more, ſhe ſhall ſee me no more; I'll let her know ſo much.

Da. I am ſorry things are ſo; but I am ſure, ſhe will never ſee him, if ſhe never comes home more.

Fa. I'll try that; I'll go over to Hampſtead in the morning, I'll ſee what I can do with her.

[Her ſiſter was now in as great a fright as before; ſhe knew the principle her ſiſter went upon was good, and ſhe was very loth to have her thruſt by violence into a ſtate of life ſhe ſo abhorred; and this made her take more freedom with her father than ſhe would have done, and take more care of her ſiſter too, leſt her father ſhould bring her away and marry her by force: ſo ſhe ſent a man and horſe away the ſame night to Hampſtead to her ſiſter, to give her notice of her father's reſolution to come over in the morning, and giving her an account of what had paſſed, adviſing her to be gone out of his way ſomewhere elſe.

As the young lady had acquainted her aunt with the whole ſtory, her aunt was ſo affected with it, and ſo abundantly juſtified her conduct in it, that, upon this news, ſhe told her, ſhe would place her at a friend's houſe a little way off, and ſhe would undertake to talk to her father, when he came; and if ſhe could not bring him to any reaſon, ſhe would ſend her the next day into the country to her other aunt, the widow of Sir James ——; ſo ſhe ſent her away in the mean time in her own coach to Hindon, a village beyond Hampſtead, with a maid and a footman to attend her, till her father was gone.

In the morning, as he ſaid he would, her father came to Hampſtead, and as ſoon as he had ſaluted

his ſiſter, he aſks for his daughter; his ſiſter told him, ſhe was gone a little way to viſit a friend of hers, but deſired him to ſit down.

She ſaw he was diſturbed and uneaſy: Come, brother, ſays ſhe, be calm and moderate, and do not treat your child with ſo much warmth; let you and I talk of this matter, my niece has given me a full account of the whole ſtory.]

Fa. Has ſhe ſo? but ſhe ſhall give me another account of it before ſhe and I have done yet.

Si. I find, brother, you conſult your paſſions only in all this matter, and I muſt tell you, they are baſe counſellors: I wiſh you would act in cool blood, and conſult your reaſon a little too.

Bro. So I think I do; and I won't be inſtructed by my children.

Si. No, no, brother, it is evident you act too violently; if you conſulted your reaſon, I am ſure it would tell you, that you are all wrong: did ever a father hurry and terrify his children ſo with his fury and his paſſions, that they are afraid to ſee him, and ready to ſwoon when they hear he is coming to them? and then do you conſider what a child this is, that you uſe thus?

Bro. I uſe her! ſhe uſes me, I think, and abuſes me too.

Si. Be patient, brother, be patient; paſſion, I tell you, is an ill counſellor; conſider the circumſtances of your child, and hear what ſhe has to ſay.

Bro. What do you mean by hearing? I think ſhe han't heard what I have to ſay, when ſhe flies thus from place to place, as if ſhe was a thief.

Si. That is becauſe you do not act like a Chriſtian, brother; you make yourſelf a terror to your children, this dares not ſee you, thoſe at home dare not ſpeak to you; why, what do you mean, bro-

ther? you did not treat them thus, when they were little: do you conſider what they are now? that they are women grown, and ought to be treated as ſuch? and deſerving women too they are, that the world ſees; and you expoſe yourſelf moſt wretchedly to treat them thus; I am very free with you.

Bro. How do I treat them? what, to provide a gentleman of 2000 l. a-year for the youngeſt, a handſome complete young gentleman as any the town can produce, and every way unexceptionable; nay, ſhe owned herſelf he was one ſhe could like very well; and to have her affront him and her father, and to diſmiſs him of her own head without conſulting me, or ſtaying till I came to town! and this after five weeks keeping him company, and when ſhe knew the writings were drawing for her marriage-ſettlement; is this a decent way of treating a father? I think you are free with me indeed, to take their parts in it.

Si. Well, brother, ſuppoſe all this to be juſt as you relate it, yet if the young people could not hit it, do we not always, when we make propoſals one to another for our children, make this condition, *viz.* if the young people can agree? and do we not put them together to talk with one another, on purpoſe that they may be acquainted, and ſee whether they can like one another, or no?

Bro. Well, and ſo did I: has he not waited upon her Ladyſhip, I tell you, five weeks? was not that time enough to know whether ſhe liked him or no?

Si. Time enough to like or diſlike, I grant it; and ſhe tells you plainly, ſhe does not like, and cannot marry him: what would you have? And as to putting him off in your abſence, ſhe ſays, ſhe told you her mind poſitively, before you went out of town, and would have given you her reaſons for

it; but you treated her with ſo little temper, that ſhe had no room to ſpeak; and at laſt told her you would have none of her reaſons, but expected ſhe ſhould have him: how do you anſwer that, pray?

Bro. I knew what ſhe had to ſay well enough; however, I gave her till my return to conſider of it: what had ſhe to do to turn him off without my knowledge, and affront a gentleman of his quality? it is an inſult upon her father, and a ſcandal to the whole family.

Si. That's all anſwered by what I ſaid before, that ſhe told you poſitively, before you went out of town, ſhe would never have him, and indeed had reſolved then to ſee him no more; for what ſhould a young woman keep a man company for, when ſhe reſolves not to have him? whatever you may think, brother, it would not have been very handſome on her ſide; beſides, I can aſſure you, your daughters are none of thoſe women, that do any thing unbecoming.

Bro. Why, ſhe did keep him company after it, for all that.

Si. Never but once, that ſhe might diſmiſs him civilly, and that was merely a force of her own upon her, becauſe your paſſion with her obliged her to do that work herſelf, which you ought to have done for her.

Bro. Well, ſhe is an undutiful, diſreſpectful creature to me; I han't been an unkind father to her: but I'll let her know herſelf my own way.

Si. You'll conſider of that, brother, when your paſſion is over.

Bro. Not I; I am no more in a paſſion now, than I was before.

Si. That may well be indeed; becauſe you were then in ſuch a paſſion, it ſeems, as diſordered all your family. Is paſſion a proper weapon to manage children with, brother?

Bro. It is impoſſible for any man to be thus treated by his children, and not be in a paſſion: ingratitude is a thing no man can bear with patience.

Si. But who ſhall be judge between you, brother? for it is poſſible you may be in the wrong as well as your children; and take this with you for a rule in all ſuch breaches, that generally thoſe that are in the greateſt paſſion, are moſt in the wrong.

Bro. No, no; I am ſure I am not in the wrong.

Si. That's making yourſelf a judge, brother; I think you ſhould let ſome judicious, ſober, impartial perſon hear your child, ſince you won't hear her yourſelf.

Bro. What, do you think I'll have arbitrators between me and my children?

Si. I hope you will act the father with them, then, and not the madman, as I muſt be plain with you, I think you do now.

Bro. Yes, yes, I'll act the father with them, while they act the part of children with me, but no longer.

Si. If God ſhould deal ſo by us all, what would become of us? Think of that, brother, when you make reſolutions againſt your own children; and without cauſe too.

Bro. Why, you won't pretend this is without cauſe?

Si. Truly, brother, I do not ſee any cauſe you have to be offended with your child: 'tis true you brought a very fine young gentleman to court her, and I know you were pleaſed with the thoughts of ſuch an alliance in your family; his eſtate, his perſon, his character, were all pleaſing; but here's the caſe, your daughter has been religiouſly and virtuouſly educated by my ſiſter.

Bro. By your ſiſter only, I ſuppoſe; you might have put that in too.

Si. Truly, brother, I do not charge you with the

crime of being any way concerned in the religious part of their education.

Bro. Did I obſtruct it, or blame her for it? I left them to her; it was none of my buſineſs.

Si. That's a ſad way of diſcharging your duty to your children, brother, in their education: but that's none of my buſineſs, we will leave it now; they have been ſoberly and religiouſly educated, whoever did it; and they are ſober and religious young women, eſpecially this youngeſt above them all; they are an honour to your family, and to the memory of my ſiſter their mother.

Bro. But none to me, I confeſs that.

Si. They will be ſo to you too in the end, if you know how to make yourſelf an honour to them.

Bro. Well, I'll make them fear me, if they won't honour me.

Si. You are hardly in temper enough to talk to: however, let me go on; I tell you they have been ſo bred, and they ſo well anſwer their education, that they are an honour to your family; their mother inſtilled principles of virtue, piety, and modeſty in their minds, while they were very young.

Bro. Well, I know all this.

Si. Pray be patient; among the reſt, this was one, That a religious life was the only heaven upon earth; they were her very words: that honour, eſtate, relation, and all human pleaſures, had no reliſh without it, and neither pointed to a future felicity, or gave any preſent, at leaſt that was ſolid and valuable; and on her death-bed ſhe cautioned them not to marry any man that did not at leaſt profeſs to own religion, and acknowledge the God that made him, whatever fortunes or advantages might offer, as to the world.

Bro. She might have found ſomething elſe to do when ſhe was juſt at her end, I think.

Si. Brother, let me be free with you; ſhe had two bad examples to ſet before them, where a want of a religious huſband had made two families very miſerable, though they had every thing elſe that the world could give; and one was your own ſiſter.

Bro. And the other herſelf; I underſtand you, ſiſter.

Si. Be that as the ſenſe of your own conduct directs you to think, brother; that's none of my buſineſs; ſhe was my ſiſter, and therefore I ſay no more of that. But theſe are all digreſſions: the young women, your daughters, thus inſtructed, and thus religiouſly inclined, are grown up; you bring a gentleman to court one of them, who, with all the advantages his perſon and circumſtances preſent, yet wants the main thing which ſhe looks for in a huſband, and without which ſhe declares ſhe will not marry, no, not if a peer of the realm courted her: Pray, what have you to ſay to ſuch a reſolution, that you ſhould oppoſe it?

Bro. How does ſhe know who is religious, and who not? She may be cheated ſooneſt, where ſhe expects it moſt.

Si. That's true; and ſhe has the more need to have her father's aſſiſtance to judge with, and aſſiſt her in her choice.

Bro. I don't inquire into that part, not I.

Si. No, I perceive you don't; ſhe has therefore the more reaſon to look to herſelf.

Bro. This gentleman may be as religious as any body, for aught ſhe knows: how can ſhe pretend to know, I ſay, who is religious?

Si. It is eaſier to know who is not religious, than who is; but this gentleman has been ſo kind to her, and ſo honeſt, as to put it out of all doubt, it ſeems; for he has frankly owned to her, that as to religion,

he never troubled his head about it; that it is a road he never travelled; he makes a jeſt of it all, as moſt young gentlemen now-a-days do; tells her, that his buſineſs is to chuſe a wife firſt, and then, perhaps, he may chuſe his religion, and the like: Is this the gentleman you would have your daughter marry, brother? Is this your care for your child? Is it for refuſing ſuch a man as this, that you are in a paſſion with your child! I bluſh for you, brother! I entreat you to conſider what you are a-doing.

Bro. I will never believe one word of all this; I am ſure it can't be true.

Si. I am ſatisfied every word of it is true, and you may inform yourſelf from your other children, if you think it worth your while.

Bro. I'll believe none of them.

Si. Not while you are in this rage, I believe you will not, for paſſion is as deaf as it is blind; but if you will cool your warmth, and let your reaſon return to its exerciſe, and to its juſt dominion in your ſoul, then you will hear and believe too: for when we are calm, and our paſſions laid, it is eaſy to judge by the very telling a ſtory, whether it be true or no; but it is not to my argument, whether it be true or not.

Bro. No! pray, what is to your argument then?

Si. Why this, whether you are not in the wrong, if it is true.

Bro. In the wrong! in what, pray?

Si. Why, to treat your child with ſuch fury and ungoverned paſſion as you do.

Bro. Why, how muſt children be treated, when they are inſolent and diſobedient?

Si. Even then not with paſſion and heat, brother. There is no caſe in the world that can poſſibly happen, which ought to make a father act in a paſſion with his own children.

Bro. No! how muſt he correct them then, when they do evil things?

Si. All with calmneſs and affection, brother; not with rage and fury; that is not correcting them, that is fighting with them; he muſt pity when he puniſhes, exhort when he corrects; he ſhould have the rod in his hand and tears in his eyes; he is to be angry at their offences, but not with their perſons; the nature of correction implies all this; it is for the child's good that a parent corrects, not for his own pleaſure; he muſt be a brute that can take pleaſure in whipping a child.

[He ſat ſilent here a good while, and ſaid not a word, his conſcience convincing him that ſhe was in the right; at length he puts it off thus.]

Bro. Well, I am not a-correcting my children now, they are paſt that.

Si. Yes, yes, brother, you are correcting now too; there are more ways of correcting than the rod and the cane; when children are grown up, the father's frowns are a part of correction, his juſt reproaches are worſe than blows; and paſſion ſhould be no more concerned in that part, than in the other.

Bro. Theſe are fine-ſpun notions; but what is all this to the caſe in hand?

Si. Why, yes, it is all to the caſe in hand. I am ſorry there is ſo cloſe an application to be made of it: for if we are not to be in a paſſion with our children, even when we have juſt reaſon to correct them, and ſee cauſe to be diſpleaſed with them, ſure we muſt not be in a paſſion with them, when there is no cauſe for diſpleaſure; I ſay diſpleaſure, for cauſe of paſſion with our children there can never be. All paſſion is a ſin, and to ſin, becauſe our children ſin, can never be our duty, nor any means to ſhew them theirs.

Bro. Does not the ſcripture ſay, *Be angry, and ſin not?*

Si. If you would read that ſcripture according

to its genuine interpretation, it would help to convince you of all I have ſaid: Be angry, but be not in a paſſion; to be angry may be juſt, as the occaſion for it may make it neceſſary; but be not immoderately angry, for that is to ſin, and no cauſe of anger can make that neceſſary; and therefore another text ſays, *Let all bitterneſs and wrath be put away from among you*, Eph. iv. 13. Theſe are ſcriptures, brother, for our conduct even with ſtrangers; but when we come to talk of children, it is ten thouſand times more binding. We cannot be in a paſſion at any body without ſin: but to be in a paſſion at our children, that is all diſtraction, and an abomination, and tends to nothing but miſchief.

Bro. You are a healing preacher, ſiſter; I confeſs, there is ſome weight in what you ſay; but what can I do, when children are thus provoking?

Si. Do! go home, and conſider the caſe maturely, and pray to God to direct you to your duty; if you did that ſeriouſly, you would ſoon ſee that your child is not to blame, and that you are very much in the wrong to preſs her in a thing of this nature.

Bro. Nay, nay, don't ſay ſo neither; you may ſay I am in the wrong in being angry, but you can not ſay I am not very ill uſed; that I am poſitive in.

Si. Let me hear you ſay ſo, when with temper and calmneſs you have heard the whole caſe. If you will not bear to hear it from your daughter herſelf, hear it from her ſiſter; and be compoſed and impartial, and then I ſhall ſee you will be of another mind.

Bro. I can't promiſe you I can have ſo much patience with them.

Si. Well, till you can, you can't ſay you are doing the duty of a father.

[Here the diſcourſe ended, and he goes home again; the young lady, thinking ſhe had ſome encouragement from this diſcourſe to hope that he would be calmer with her, went home too in the afternoon, and took care to let her father know it, and ſee her in the houſe; however, he took little notice of her for ſome time.

The next morning he called his eldeſt daughter to him, and began another diſcourſe with her upon the affair thus:]

Come, child, ſays the father, now paſſion is a little over, and I am diſpoſed, however ill I am uſed, to bear it as well as I can; pray give me a true account of this fooliſh girl, your ſiſter, and how ſhe has managed herſelf ſince I have been gone.

Da. What, about Mr ——, Sir?

Fa. Ay, ay; was ever any wench ſo mad, to affront ſuch a gentleman as he was? I wiſh he had pitched upon you, my dear.

Da. It is my mercy, Sir, he did not; and I deſire to be thankful for it as long as I live.

Fa. What do you mean by that, child?

Da. Becauſe I have not been forced to diſoblige my father, or to marry againſt my mind, as my ſiſter has been; two things I know not which are moſt terrible to me ſo much as to think of.

Fa. Why, you would not have been ſuch a fool to have run into theſe ſcruples too, would you? I have a better opinion of your ſenſe.

Da. I deſire your good opinion of me may always continue; and therefore, Sir, as I am not tried, I hope you will not put a queſtion to me, that is not ſo proper for me to anſwer.

Fa. Well, well, be eaſy, child, I have a religious man in my eye for you, I aſſure you; we will have no need of ſuch fooliſh breaches on your account.

Da. It is time enough, Sir, to talk of that.

Fa. Well then, as to your ſiſter: You know, when I left her, I charged her to entertain him till my return, and you know what reſolutions I made if ſhe did not.

Da. Dear father, you went away in a paſſion; ſhe had declared poſitively ſhe would not have him, and ſhe could not think of entertaining a gentleman, after ſhe had reſolved not to have him; it would not have been handſome: However, I did over-perſuade her to ſee him that night you went away; in hopes, truly, that ſhe might have had ſome opportunity to be better ſatisfied in her main ſcruple about religion, and that ſhe might have got it over: but, on the contrary, he made ſuch an open declaration of his contempt for all religion, and his perfect ignorance of any thing about it, that I could not but wonder at it; ſure he muſt think we were a family of Atheiſts, or elſe he did it to affront her; for he could never think it could be agreeable to any of us: and upon this ſhe made the ſame open declaration to him, that ſhe could never think of joining herſelf to a man ſo perfectly void of principles; and ſo they parted, as it were by agreement.

Fa. Was it ſo ſhort between them, then?

Da. No, Sir, there was a great deal more; they did not part with diſguſt at all; I am perſuaded he loves her entirely, and I am ſure ſhe loves him too; I wiſh ſhe did not.

Fa. And is ſhe not a double fool then, to thwart thus both her fortune and her fancy, and all for ſhe knows not what? Had he been a fawning hypocrite, that could have talked of religion, whether he had any or no, ſhe would have taken him.

Da. She would not have been eaſily deceived, Sir, for ſhe lays the whole ſtreſs of her life's welfare upon it; it is a ſolid principle with her, which

ſhe cannot go from, and which ſhe thinks her fancy and fortune, and all things in this world, ought to ſubmit to.

Fa. Well, but you ſay it was a long diſcourſe; I don't doubt but you have heard it all, over and over. Pray give me as full an account of it, child, as you can.

Da. Yes, Sir.

[Here ſhe relates the whole night's diſcourſe between the gentleman and her ſiſter, as it is in the foregoing dialogue, except only that about ſtaying for him till he was grown religious.]

Fa. Well, I think they are both fools; he for being ſo open, and ſhe for being ſo nice: it will be long enough before ſhe has ſuch another offer, I dare ſay.

Da. I believe that is leaſt of her affliction, Sir; ſhe is only troubled at her diſobliging you, which ſhe had no poſſibility to avoid, without oppreſſing her conſcience, and making herſelf miſerable.

Fa. I do not ſee that is any of her concern.

Da. Yes, indeed, Sir, it is; and I am afraid ſhe will grieve herſelf to death about it.

Fa. If that had been any grief to her, ſhe would not have acted as ſhe has done.

Da. It is a terrible caſe, Sir, to have ſo many powerful arguments preſs againſt conſcience; I wonder ſhe has been able to ſtand her ground againſt them, and I am ſure it lies very heavy upon her mind.

Fa. What do you mean by arguments preſſing upon her conſcience?

Da. Why, Sir, to name no more, here is a gentleman, who by his profeſſed choice of her, and extraordinary propoſals to her, has given an undoubted teſtimony of his loving her very ſincerely. In-

the *next* place, a ſplendid fortune, giving her a proſpect of enjoying all that this world can offer. *Thirdly*, A very agreeable perſon, and one that has, by his engaging conduct, made ſome way into her affection; ſo that it is eaſy to ſee, ſhe not only has a reſpect for him, but really loves him. And, *laſtly*, The diſpleaſure of her father, who was never diſobeyed before, and to diſoblige whom is effectually to ruin herſelf for this world. Are not theſe, Sir, preſſing things?

Fa. And why do they not prevail with her then? and why is ſhe ſo wilful?

Da. Nothing but her conſcience, a ſenſe of her duty to God, and her own future peace, has upheld her reſolution. He has profeſſed himſelf to be a man of no religion, and ſuch a one ſhe dares not marry.

Fa. I underſtand nothing of it, nor do I ſee any need to pretend conſcience in the caſe at all; there is nothing of weight in it.

Da. I hope you cannot think but my ſiſter would be very glad it had been otherwiſe.

Fa. What need ſhe trouble herſelf about his religion?

Da. It is my buſineſs, Sir, to give you an account of the fact, not to enter into the argument; it is enough that one daughter has diſpleaſed you already.

Fa. Well, well, I ſee ſhe is come home again: I have nothing to ſay to her; I do not look upon her as any relation of mine.

Da. If you do not abate ſomething, Sir, and ſhew yourſelf a little tender of her, I believe you will ſoon have but two daughters to provide for; perhaps not that, for I think it will break all our hearts to ſee her.

[All that his eldeſt daughter could ſay, or that either of his ſiſters in the country had ſaid, had yet no effect upon him; but he carried it ſo reſerved to his daughter, that ſhe appeared in the family as if ſhe had not belonged to him; and he continued it ſo long, that it began to be very probable he would never alter it; which ſo grieved the poor young lady, that ſhe fell very ſick with it, and it was feared ſhe inclined to a conſumption; and being very ill one day, her ſiſter, who was her faſt friend and only comforter, deſired ſhe would go out a little and take the air. So they reſolved to go to their aunt's at Hampſtead; the ſiſter's deſign being to perſuade her to ſtay two or three days with their aunt; in which ſhort journey ſeveral ſtrange-like adventures befel them, which will gradually introduce themſelves in the following diſcourſe, which began between them as they were in the coach going to Hampſtead.]

Dear ſiſter, ſays the eldeſt ſiſter, what will become of you! Will you give way to this grief ſo much, as to let it deſtroy you?

Yo Si. What can I do, ſiſter? I ſupport it as well as I can, but it ſinks my ſpirits; it is too heavy for me; I believe it will deſtroy me, as you ſay.

Eld Si. But ſhake it off then, ſiſter.

Yo. Si. Shake it off! You talk of it as a thing in my power: no, no, ſiſter, effects rarely ceaſe till their cauſes are removed.

Eld. Si. Nay, if you would talk philoſophy, I am ſure philoſophy would cure you.

Yo. Si. Ay, but I am no philoſopher, I hope; pray how would that cure me?

Eld. Si. How that I mean by philoſophy is reaſon: though women are no philoſophers, they are rational creatures: I think you might reaſon yourſelf out of it.

Yo. Si. I do talk reaſon, when I ſay grief having ſeized upon my ſpirits, and the cauſe being immoveable, while that remains ſo, the effect will be ſo too.

Eld. Si. It is not in my power to remove the cauſe; but yet, I think, if you would hear reaſon, you might remove the grief, which is the effect.

Yo. Si. And you think reaſoning would do it? Pray what kind of reaſoning is that?

Eld. Si. Why, to reaſon but upon the folly, the madneſs, the injuſtice, nay, the ſin of immoderate grief.

Yo. Si. You begin warmly; pray let's hear the folly of it.

Eld. Si. Why, ſeveral things will convince you of its being the fooliſheſt thing in the world: Grief is a ſenſeleſs, uſeleſs paſſion; it is uſeleſs, becauſe it is perfectly incapable of doing any good, and only capable of doing evil: Grief is indeed no paſſion, but a quality, a diſeaſe of the mind, which muſt be cured; it is an evil ſpirit that muſt be caſt out: beſides, it is a ſenſeleſs thing; for it is a mean to no end; it aims at nothing, ſeeks nothing, endeavours nothing, only corrodes the ſpirits, ſtagnates the very ſenſes, and ſtupifies the ſoul; and therefore grief was anciently repreſented as a viper, generated in the liver, and preying upon the vitals of the man; and when it came within a certain ſpace of the heart, it had two ways to go; if it aſcended, it quitted the hypochondriac veſſels, and ſo poſſeſſing the brain, ended in madneſs; if it deſcended, it poſſeſſed the blood, and ended in death.

Yo. Si. Pray end your reaſoning; for I do not underſtand it; go back to the point propoſed, what muſt I do? You ſay, ſhake it off; I aſk, what muſt I do to ſhake it off? How can I ſhake it off?

Eld. Si. Why, divert your mind, think no more of him; turn your thoughts to things that are in

being: this is now a thing over; you ſhould only eſteem it as a hiſtory of things done in the ages paſt.

Yo. Si. You ſurpriſe me, ſiſter.

Eld. Si. Surpriſe you, child! in what?

Yo. Si. I am both grieved and aſtoniſhed, that you would have ſuch mean thoughts of me as to think my grief is founded upon the parting with Mr ——: I proteſt to you, I am ſo far from having the leaſt concern of that kind upon me, that it is the only comfortable reflection I have in the world, and I give God thanks from the bottom of my ſoul, as often as I think of it, that I am delivered from him.

Eld. Si. I believe you are ſenſible, that it is better as it is; but I know it is a great ſtruggle between principle and affection.

Yo. Si. Not at all, ſiſter, I am over all that; it did not hold me half an hour: when my conſcience dictated to me my real danger, the future felicity of my life, the command of God, and the dying inſtructions of my dear mother, do you think the ſtirrings of an infant-affection to the man, was able to ſtruggle with ſuch an army of convictions? God forbid! no, no; he is to me as the moſt contemptible fellow on earth.

Eld. Si. No, no, ſiſter, you never thought him a contemptible fellow, I am ſure; nor is he ſo in himſelf.

Yo. Si. No, as a gentleman he is not ſo; he is a lovely creature, and the only man in the world I could ever ſay I had an affection for.

Eld. Si. I know you loved him; nay, and do love him ſtill; your face betrays you, ſiſter; while your tongue named him, your heart fluttered, and your colour changed: I could ſee it plain enough.

Yo. Si. How cruel is that now, ſiſter! you

prompt the affection to revive, as if you would recall the temptation, and aſſiſt it in a new attack upon me: I allow I loved him, and as a gentleman ſo every way agreeable, I do ſo ſtill; but ſhall I yoke myſelf with one of God's enimies! embrace one that God abhors! ſpeak no more of it, I entreat you.

Eld. Si. That's carrying it too far; you cannot ſay who God abhors.

Yo. Si. I'll put it the other way then, to ſtop your mouth: ſhall I yoke myſelf with a practical Atheiſt! embrace one that rejects God, love him that hates my Saviour!

Eld. Si. Nay, that's too far too; he told you he did not hate religion.

Yo. Si. You cavil, ſiſter, you don't argue; I'll give it you in ſcripture-words; is he not one of thoſe who ſay to the Almighty, *Depart from us, we deſire not the knowledge of his ways?* Did he not openly ſay the ſame thing? is he not only void of the knowledge of religion, but of any deſire to have any knowledge of it?

Eld. Si. Do not take what I ſaid ill, ſiſter; I acknowledge he is indeed ſuch a one; but ſtill you love him, ſiſter.

Yo. Si. No, ſiſter, as ſuch I abhor him; the thoughts of having been but in danger of him, make my blood run chill in my veins; ſhall I marry a profligate! a man of no religion! nay, that has the impudence to own it! no, ſiſter, I rejoice that I am delivered from him, and I never deſire to ſee him more as long as I live.

Eld. Si. And are you really got as far above it as you ſay you are?

Yo. Si. Dear ſiſter, have not you and I often lamented the loſs of a religious family, even in our own father? the want of religious converſation, the

want of a father to teach, inſtruct, inform, and explain religious things to us? Have we not ſeen the dreadful life our aunt, my father's ſiſter, lived for want of a religious huſband, and the heavenly life my aunt here, our mother's ſiſter, lives, that has a pious, ſober religious huſband and family? And can you think I would ever be a wife to ſuch another as Sir James! beſides, could I bear to be tied to a man that could not pray to God for me, and would not pray to God with me! God forbid! the greateſt eſtate and fineſt man in the world ſhould never incline me to ſuch a thought! I thank God my ſoul abhors it; and it is the joy of my heart, that the ſnare is broken.

Eld, Si. Why, what is it then that oppreſſes your mind thus?

Yo. Si. O ſiſter, you cannot aſk me ſuch a queſtion.

[Juſt as ſhe ſaid thoſe words, came a gentleman on horſeback, and galloped by the coach-ſide, and looking into the coach, pulled off his hat to her; and having paid his compliments, he rode on. The very moment he looked in, the eldeſt ſiſter had dropped her fan in the chariot, and was ſtooping down to reach it, and ſo did not ſee him: but when ſhe got up, looking at her ſiſter, ſhe found her look very pale.]

Eld. Si. What's the matter, ſiſter, (ſays ſhe, being much frighted,) an't you well?

Yo. Si. No, ſays ſhe; lend me your bottle.

[She gives her a little bottle to ſmell to, and ſhe began to come to herſelf.]

Eld. Si. What was the matter, ſiſter? was you frighted?

Yo. Si. I was a little diſordered.

Eld. Si. What was it? did thoſe men that rode by ſay any thing to affront you?

Yo. Si. One of them did: did you not ſee them?

Eld. Si. No: I heard ſomebody ride by, but my head was down, looking for my fan: why, who was it? it was not Mr ——, was it?

Yo. Si. O! yes, it was; let us go back, ſiſter, I entreat you: I am very ill.

Eld. Si. Why, we have a long way back, and we are almoſt at Hampſtead now; we had better go to my aunt's; we ſhall be there preſently.

Yo. Si. Well, let us then bid him drive apace.

Eld. Si. Alas! there he is a little before us.

[She calls to the coachman to drive apace, and looking out of the coach, ſhe ſaw the gentleman riding ſoftly with only two footmen, a little way off the coach.]

Yo. Si. If he comes again to the coach-ſide, and offers to ſpeak, I beg of you, ſiſter, do you anſwer him, for I will not ſpeak one word to him.

Eld Si. He is gone now a great way off.

[She looks out of the coach again.]

[They ſoon came to their aunt's houſe, and went in, the coach ſtanding at the door: after they had been there a quarter of an hour, the gentleman, who knew well enough where they were, came to the houſe, and ſent in their footman to tell the eldeſt ſiſter he was there, and deſired the favour to ſpeak two or three words with her.]

The ſervant led him into a parlour, and the young lady came down to him in a few minutes; he told her, that before he entered into any diſcourſe, he muſt aſſure her of two things: Firſt,

That his overtaking them upon the road was

purely accidental, and without the leaſt deſign, as ſhe might eaſily be ſatisfied by his ſervant and baggage; for he was juſt ſetting out on a journey of above an hundred miles, and ſhould not return under three weeks at leaſt. And, ſecondly, That he had no deſign in calling there, to move any thing to her ſiſter concerning the old affair, but only to have two or three words with her relating to himſelf. You know, ſiſter, ſays he, for I muſt ſtill give you that name of reſpect, upon what terms your ſiſter and I parted; and as I promiſed her I would wait on her again, and did not, I have been very uneaſy leſt ſhe might think I ſhewed her ſome diſreſpect, and that I took ill what ſhe ſaid to me: and truly for ſome time ſo I did. She anſwered coldly, That ſhe believed her ſiſter had not at all been diſſatisfied at his not coming again. No, Madam, ſays he, I believe that, by the manner of the diſmiſs ſhe had given me; but however I would not be rude to her, whatever ſhe thought fit to ſay to me. She returned, and with a little more concern than before, that ſhe hoped, however her ſiſter had thought fit not to go on with what was propoſed, yet that ſhe had not been rude to him. No, Madam, ſays he, not rude. Sir, ſays ſhe, as you had offered nothing to my ſiſter, but what was like yourſelf, very honourable, I am ſure ſhe does not ſo ill underſtand herſelf as to offer any thing unbecoming to you. He returned, with a very obliging way of ſpeaking, that her ſiſter underſtood herſelf perfectly well: and I aſſure you, ſays he, ſhe underſtood my character better than I did myſelf. I do not rightly take your meaning, Sir, ſaid ſhe, my ſiſter could make no objection to your character. Madam, ſaid he, you know very well upon what foundation your ſiſter altered her mind, and abſolutely refuſed any farther treaty with me, *viz.* That I was a profane, wicked, irreligious

creature: The fact was true; I owned it to her, that I neither had any knowledge of religion, or desired any, for which I was a very great brute.

I think you were very sincere, Sir, says she.

O Madam, said he, I do not say I was a brute for owning it, but I was a brute for living in that horrid manner, and yet thinking that any sober woman could entertain a thought of having me.

I am very sorry, said the lady, it happened so.

I am very glad, Madam, that she treated me so, replied he, and shall love her ten thousand times better for it, if that be possible, than ever I did before.

Says she to him again, Sir, you are pleased to banter a little.

No, sister, says he, I don't banter: and my stopping to speak with you was for this reason; I do not ask to speak with your sister, but I beg you will tell her from me very seriously, that she has been a better instructor to me than my father or mother, or all the tutors and friends I had in my life; she has convinced me, that I was a monster, a scandalous fellow, that ought to have been ashamed to pretend to a woman that had the least sense of her education, or of him that made her: I have reason to give thanks to God every day I live, that ever I saw her face, and that I had that repulse from her. Tell her, I recommend it to her, to preserve that noble heavenly resolution, which she said she had taken up, *viz.* never to marry any but a religious man: she is undone if she breaks it; and though I am never able to deserve her, yet I will always think of her as the mother of all that is or ever will be good in me, and value the memory of her accordingly! He waited no answer, but with all possible civility took his leave, and his horses being at the door, took horse and went away. She waited on

him to the door; and as he was paying his reſpects to her, ſitting on his horſe, he ſaid to her, Dear Madam, I hope you will give your ſiſter a particular account of what I have ſaid to you. She anſwered, ſhe would not fail to do it with all the exactneſs poſſible.

As ſoon as he was gone, ſhe run up to her ſiſter; but before ſhe could ſpeak to her, her youngeſt ſiſter cried out to her, Siſter, before you ſpeak, do not aſk me to go down; for I will not ſee him.]

Eld. Si. Don't be ſo haſty, he did not deſire to ſee you, he's gone.

Yo. Si. Is he gone?

[She obſerved, for all ſhe was ſo warm at firſt, that when ſhe ſaid he did not deſire to ſee her, ſhe changed her countenance a little, and more when ſhe ſaid he was gone.]

Eld. Si. Truly, ſiſter, I don't think it is fit you ſhould ſee him; I ſee by you, if he was to talk one hour with you, you'd loſe all your reſolution.

Yo. Si Perhaps that's the reaſon why I reſolve not to ſee him; won't you allow me to know my own weakneſs? Is it not enough that I have conquered myſelf once?

Eld. Si. Yes, I allow it; and that you act a very prudent part; for I know you ſtruggle with your own affections; I do not deſire to preſs you, and never did.

Yo. Si. I can better keep my reſolution of not ſeeing him, than perhaps I might keep my reſolution of not marrying him, if I ſaw him; though I know I am ruined if I have him.

Eld. Si. As he is now, I don't know whether you would or no; there's a ſtrange alteration in him.

Yo. Si. What do you mean by an alteration?

Eld. Si. Why, he is quite another man; he talks

like a man quite changed; you would have been ſurpriſed at him.

Yo. Si. O! has he a mind to put that trick upon me? No, no, 'tis too late now.

Eld. Si. What trick do you mean?

Yo. Si. O! he told me he could play the hypocrite moſt nicely, and was ſure he could deceive me; but it won't do; I am prepared for that.

Eld. Si. I am ſure he was no hypocrite before, he was too plain before; and I do not ſee why you ſhould ſay he's a hypocrite now.

Yo. Si. Becauſe he told me he would be ſo; he acknowledged he had ſhewn more honeſty than diſcretion before, and was ſorry for it; and that if he was to begin again, he would take juſt the contrary courſe.

Eld. Si. Well, I dare ſay, he is no hypocrite now, any more than he was before.

Yo. Si. I won't truſt him.

Eld. Si. But you may give me leave to tell the ſubſtance of his diſcourſe.

Yo. Si. Dear ſiſter, do not be drawn in to lay ſnares for me; you would not be willing to have me deceived, why ſhould you aſſiſt in it? I deſire to hear nothing of it.

Eld. Si. That's very diſobliging, ſiſter, to me; would I aſſiſt any man to deceive you, that have ſo much applauded your reſolution not to be deceived?

Yo. Si. Nay, and aſſiſted me too in withſtanding the importunities of my own affections, or elſe I believe I had not been able to have ſupported my ſenſe of duty; and therefore I wonder you ſhould forſake me now.

Aunt. Child, do not preſs your ſiſter to hear any thing; I muſt confeſs her caſe is wonderful nice; ſhe loves the gentleman; ſhe does not ſtick to acknowledge it: ſhe has great ſcruples on her thoughts

about her duty to her father, and they all ſway on the ſame ſide; her father frights her with violent words, and hard uſage, and threatenings of turning her out of doors: againſt all this ſhe ſtands ſingle in obedience to her conſcience; I think we ſhould aſſiſt her.

Eld. Si. Dear Madam, if my ſiſter was not here, I would ſay a great deal more; I think ſhe has acted the nobleſt part in its kind that any young body ever did; I wiſh I may be able to preſerve ſuch a reſolution, if ever it ſhould be my caſe; and I am ſure I ſhould be far from diſcouraging her; but what I was going to tell her was nothing to diſcourage her; I wiſh ſhe would let me tell it you firſt.

Yo. Si. With all my heart, tell it my aunt; I'll withdraw.

[She goes out of the room, and the eldeſt ſiſter tells her aunt what the gentleman had ſaid.]

Aunt. Well, niece, I do think of the two it may be ſtill better not to tell it your ſiſter; let us lay it up in our hearts; if it be true, and he is a reformed man, we ſhall perhaps hear more of him; if not, to perſuade her he is really changed, is but to make her love him more, without knowing whether he ever thinks any more of her or no, and that can be no ſervice to her.

Eld. Si. I ſubmit, Madam, to your directions, but then I break my promiſe.

Aunt. You may find a time for that too.

[The diſcourſe broke off here, and her aunt finding the young lady very ill and diſturbed, deſired her ſiſter to leave her there for a few days, to tell her father how ill ſhe was, and that ſhe thought the country might divert her a little; but that if he deſired her to come home, ſhe would return whenever he pleaſed. Her eldeſt ſiſter did ſo; but all the an-

ſwer ſhe got was, She might ſtay there for ever, if ſhe would, he never deſired to be troubled with her any more.]

DIALOGUE IV.

THE former dialogue having put an end to the courtſhip between the gentleman and his miſtreſs for the preſent, and there being ſome interval of time between thoſe things and the remaining part of the ſtory, that interval is filled up with another little affair in the ſame family, of ſtill a nicer nature than the other, though not carried ſo far.

The father had frequently diſcourſed theſe things with his eldeſt daughter, in the caſe of her ſiſter, as is to be ſeen in the laſt dialogue, and found, by her diſcourſe, that ſhe was pretty much of her ſiſter's mind, in the matter of chuſing a huſband: but having a gentleman in his thoughts for her, who had the character of a very ſober, religious perſon, he made no queſtion but he would diſpoſe of this daughter both to her ſatisfaction, and his own.

It was with a view to this deſign, that he had jeſted with her, in one of their laſt diſcourſes, that he had a religious huſband in ſtore for her, and that he hoped he ſhould give her no occaſion to play the fool, as her ſiſter had done.

In conſequence of this, he took occaſion to tell her one evening after ſupper, that what he had ſpoken in a way of jeſt to her, at ſuch a time, was really no jeſt in his own thoughts; that he had been ſpoken to by a certain gentleman, a conſiderable merchant in the city, whoſe eldeſt ſon had an inclination to pay his reſpects to her; And I aſſure you, my dear, ſays the father, he has the character of a very ſober religious gentleman; and I am ſure his father and mother are very good people; indeed

the whole family are noted for a religious family, and I know no family in the whole city that have a better character.

She made him no anſwer at all, till he began with her again. Why are you ſo ſilent, child? ſaid her father. Have you nothing to ſay? Methinks, when I look back on the diſorder which the obſtinacy of your ſiſter has put us all in, I would be glad to have every difficulty removed beforehand with you, and therefore I ſpeak early, that if you have any objections, I may hear them, and not be driven afterwards to aſk people pardon, for ill uſage which I have had no hand in; and I would have you uſe your freedom now, that I may take nothing ill from you afterwards. And thus he preſſed her to ſpeak.

Daughter. I am in no haſte, Sir, to marry; the times terrify me; the education, the manners, the conduct of gentlemen is now ſo univerſally looſe, that I think for a young woman to marry, is like a horſe ruſhing into the battle; I have not courage ſo much as to think of it.

Father. But there are a great many ſober, civilized young gentlemen in the world; it is hard to reproach them all, becauſe many of them are wicked.

Da. Sir, it is thoſe civilized people which I ſpeak of; for even thoſe who now paſs for ſober, are not like what it was formerly. When you look narrowly among them, as they are in the groſs, ten rakes for one ſober man; ſo among the ſober men, that are called civilized men, and whoſe morals will bear any character, there are ten Atheiſts to one religious man; and which is worſe than all the reſt, if a woman finds a religious man, it is three to one again, whether he agrees with her in principles; and ſo ſhe is in danger of being undone, even in the beſt.

Fa. I never heard the like! Why, what are my daughters made of? What, is nothing good enough in the world for you! If you will all go on ſuch niceties, I muſt never think any more of marrying any of you.

Da. You had rather, Sir, not think of it, I dare ſay, than think of ſeeing us miſerable.

Fa. Why, there is not a man on earth can pleaſe you, as you have ſtated it.

Da. Providence will either ſettle me as I would be ſettled, Sir, or will, I hope, diſpoſe you to be as well ſatisfied with my preſent condition as I am.

Fa. Why, it ſeems, you are gone mad farther than your diſtracted ſiſter.

Da. I hope, Sir, I am in my ſenſes, and ſhall be kept ſo.

Fa. Why, it ſeems a religious huſband won't pleaſe you: what is it you would have?

Da. I deſire, Sir, to live as I am, at leaſt till ſomething offers, which is fit for me to accept.

Fa. What do you call fit, child? What can be fit in your way of talking?

Da. When my judgment and conſcience are ſatisfied, Sir, I believe my fancy will not be very troubleſome to you. If I muſt marry, Sir, I would have it be ſo, as I may expect God's bleſſing and my father's.

Fa. I tell you nothing in the nation will ſatisfy your judgment and conſcience, as you call it, if the notion you have of things be true.

Da. Then I am very well ſatisfied to remain as I am.

Fa. That's ungrateful to your father's care for you.

Da. I am ſure, Sir, I would not be ungrateful, nor undutiful to you; but I know not what you would have me do.

Fa. I would have you ſee this gentleman that I have propoſed to you.

Da. I ſhall ſubmit to any thing you command me, Sir, that is not a breach of my duty to God; I hope you will deſire nothing of me, that I cannot do with a quiet mind.

Fa. Well, you may ſee him; I hope that can be no harm.

Da. If you will pleaſe to let me know then, how far you allow me to be in my own diſpoſal, and how far not; and whether I have the liberty to refuſe him, if I do not like him.

Fa. Yes, if you will reſolve to uſe your judgment, and not refuſe him before you ſee him, but give good reaſons for what you do.

Da. I think, Sir, I ought to have a negative voice, without being obliged to diſpute my reaſons with my father; for that is juſt bringing me into the ſame condition with my ſiſter. Her reaſons are good to her, but not to you, Sir; and ſo you take her conſcience of duty to God, to be a contempt of her duty to you: I would not be run into the ſame ſnare.

Fa. You are mighty poſitive in your demanding a negative voice againſt your father.

Da. But I had better know my caſe beforehand, that I may not inſiſt upon more than is my right, and offend you, Sir, in ſeeming to encroach upon your government.

Fa. Let me know, then, what your demand is.

Da. Sir, I think, when you propoſe marrying to me, the diſcourſe of portion and ſettlement is in your province, and I have nothing to do with it: but I think I ought to be at liberty to like or diſlike, receive or refuſe the perſon, and that abſolutely.

Fa. What, without ſhewing any reaſon?

Da. No; I ought, without doubt, to tell my father my objections, and to give a due force to all the arguments my father may uſe to ſatisfy my doubts; but I ought not to be forced to like, even though I could not maintain my reaſons.

Fa. And you capitulate with me for this liberty, before you ſee this gentleman, do you?

Da. No, Sir, I do not capitulate with you, but I hope you will, of your own accord, grant me the liberty which the nature of the thing calls for; that if I muſt ſee the gentleman, I may have the freedom to take or refuſe; if not, there is no need to ſee him; I may be given by contract, and married by proxy, as the great people (fools, I ſhould ſay) do, as well as by treaty.

Fa. Well, well, I an't a-going to give you, nor to ſell you: if you won't have him, you may let him alone.

Da. That's all I deſire, Sir; with this addition only, *viz.* that my father will not be diſpleaſed or diſobliged, whether I take or leave.

Fa. I can't promiſe you that, indeed, daughter.

Da. Then I beg of you, Sir, I may never ſee him at all.

Fa. Very well; then it ſhall be ſo; you ſhall never ſee him at all. I find you are all alike; you may look out for yourſelves, if you will. [He riſes up in a paſſion, and goes away, but comes in again preſently.] But, it may be, I may not like your chuſing, any more than you will like mine. [Her father returns.]

Fa. I wonder what is it you would all have me do in ſuch a caſe as this; here is a match propoſed to your ſiſter; how ſhe has treated me, you know. Now I have a propoſal to you, where the grand objection is removed; what can you deſire of a father?

Da. Sir, I deſire only, that if you think fit to diſ-

courſe ſuch things as theſe with us, we might be able to ſpeak for ourſelves without diſcompoſing you; we have not a mother to ſtand between, and make our objections, and to hear our reaſons.

Fa. Well that's true; [She weeps, and that moves him, eſpecially ſpeaking of her mother.] it is my loſs as well as yours. Come, let me hear, however, if you have any objection againſt the perſon I propoſe now, tell it me. I'll endeavour not to be warm.

Da. I can have no objection to the man I never ſaw, or heard of; but I think we ſhould have a liberty to refuſe, Sir, when we come to diſcourſe of ſuch a thing with the perſon; and that is all I aſk, and that we may not diſoblige you, if we uſe that liberty; and without that liberty, I deſire you will be pleaſed never to make any propoſal at all to me; and if ever I make one myſelf, I will be content to be denied.

Fa. You are very poſitive.

Da. It ſeems to be ſo reaſonable, Sir, that I cannot think any children can aſk leſs, or any father think it is too hard; it is the children that are to feel the conſequences of the miſtake, if there be any.

Fa. Well, that's true; come then, if you will talk with this gentleman, you will have your liberty to take him or leave him; have you any objection to make beforehand? if you have, let me know it; that will prevent all occaſions of diſguſt.

Da. Will you pleaſe to hear me with patience, Sir?

Fa. Yes, I will, if I can.

Da. You have heard ſo much ſaid by me, Sir, in my ſiſter's behalf, that you muſt neceſſarily believe I am of the ſame opinion; that is to ſay, that I would not marry a man that made no profeſſion of religion, upon any account whatſoever, were his eſtate, his perſon, his ſobriety, his qualifications ever ſo inviting. I need not give my reaſons for this, Sir;

what I have ſaid, what my ſiſter and my aunts have ſaid on that account, is enough; but it is my misfortune, Sir, to have another ſcruple beyond all this, and which the caſe of my ſiſter gave no occaſion to mention.

Fa. Very well; then you intend to be more troubleſome than your ſiſter, I find.

Da. I hope not, Sir, becauſe I give my ſcruples in beforehand; and if any thing offers to you abroad, that will ſhock the foundation I lay down, I hope you'll not hearken to it on my account, and then you will have no occaſion to ſay I am troubleſome.

Fa. Well, let's hear it, however.

Da. Why, Sir, as I will never marry any man, who does not make ſome profeſſion of religion, however rich or agreeable, handſome or ſober he is; ſo, however ſerious or religious he is, I will never marry any man, whoſe principles, opinion, and way of worſhip ſhall not agree with my own.

Fa. And is that your reſolution?

Da. I hope it is well grounded, Sir, and that you will not diſapprove my reaſons for it, when you pleaſe to hear them calmly, and to bear with my mean way of arguing them.

Fa. I think I was much in the right to ſay you would be more troubleſome than your ſiſter; however, you do your ſiſter ſome kindneſs in it, for this extravagant humour makes her's look a thouſand times more reaſonable than it did before.

Da. That's what I foreſaw, Sir, *viz.* that I ſhall remove your diſpleaſure from my ſiſter, and bring it down upon myſelf; but I cannot help it.

Fa. Well, I ſhall relieve myſelf againſt all your humours; I'll talk no more of ſettling any of you, till your curioſity is abated.

[Though her father ſeemed to give it over thus

in diſcourſe with his daughter, yet he had gone farther with the gentleman that made the propoſal, than he had told her; and had invited the father and mother to dinner the next day, with an intent that they ſhould ſee and be acquainted with his daughters; ſuppoſing at the ſame time, that they would bring the young gentleman with them.

They came to dinner accordingly; but, as the father knew well enough, that the education of their ſon was in a different way from that of his daughter, and that ſhe had declared herſelf ſo poſitively in that part, he had deſired them privately not to bring their ſon to dinner: when they were come, and before his daughter was called in, the father told them how the caſe ſtood between him and his eldeſt daughter, and that he ſaw no remedy but this, that, as he had not told her any thing of the deſign of this invitation, or that they were the family he had deſigned her a huſband out of; ſo, if they thought fit to turn their eyes to his ſecond daughter, he was in hopes ſhe would have more wit than to run into the ridiculous ſcruples of the eldeſt. They preſently agreed, that it was not at all reaſonable to force the inclination of the young lady; that they ſaw no room to bring the opinions in religion together, in their children, their opinions at that time differing extremely, and their ſon being as poſitive, they believed, as his daughter; ſo they ſaid, with all their hearts; if their ſon could fancy his ſecond daughter as well, it ſhould be the ſame thing to them: however, the mother of the young gentleman aſked him, if he would give her leave to enter into diſcourſe with his daughter upon the ſubject of her ſcruples? he told her, with all his heart, for he would be glad to have her change her mind; becauſe, as on the one hand, he ſhould be very well ſatisfied to bring them together, ſo he really thought

her notions were empty and ſimple, and ſhould be glad ſhe was made wiſer: but then, Madam, ſays he, you muſt not diſcover the real deſign; for if you do, ſhe will be backward to ſpeak freely. She agreed to that, and ſo this private diſcourſe ended; and his daughters being introduced, and the uſual ceremonies paſſed, they went to dinner, the young ladies knowing nothing of the deſign of their being invited.

The father and mother were charmed at the conduct of the young woman; her perſon and manner, the modeſty of her behaviour, and above all, the politeneſs and pertinence of her diſcourſe; and, ſomething happening to be ſaid about marrying, the father falls to rallying his daughters upon their nicety in that point, that nothing would ſerve them but religious men. There is my daughter ——, ſays he, (pointing to his youngeſt), I think nothing will do for her but a parſon; ſhe refuſed a gentleman of 2000 l. a-year t'other day, becauſe he was not religious enough for her.

No, Madam, ſays his daughter, my father means, becauſe he had no religion at all; hardly ſo much as a coach-horſe; for a coach horſe often knows the way to the church-door.

That alters the caſe quite, ſaid Madam: why, Sir, ſays ſhe, you would not have married your daughter to a brute! a man without religion is a worſe brute than a horſe! for the horſe obeys the dictates of nature, but an Atheiſt acts againſt reaſon, nature, and common ſenſe. I would not marry a child of mine to a man of no religion, if he had ten thouſand pounds a-year.

Well, ſays he, there's my daughter ——, (pointing to his eldeſt). ſhe goes farther; ſhe is not ſatisfied with a religious huſband, but ſhe muſt have one of her own opinion in religion, that goes to church

where ſhe goes to church, and worſhips juſt as ſhe worſhips: I don't think ſhe will ever be pleaſed, while ſhe lives.

Madam, ſays the eldeſt, I expected my father would be upon my bones next: my father talks of my opinion, as if I was ſomething that nobody elſe is; as if I was one of the new prophets, or of ſome ſtrange ſingular opinion, ſomething monſtrous in religion; all I ſay is, that as I profeſs nothing but what I think is right, and what thouſands agree with me in, if ever I do marry, as I ſuppoſe I never ſhall, why ſhould I not chuſe to have my huſband and I of the ſame opinion, that we may ſerve God together?

Madam, ſays the old lady, your father does but jeſt with you; he can never oppoſe ſo reaſonable a thing as that; I muſt confeſs, I think it is much to be deſired; I will not ſay but there is a poſſibility of doing well without it; it may not be a ſin; but I own, it is better, if it can be ſo.

I am ſure it would be a ſin in me, ſays the daughter, becauſe it would be againſt my conſcience.

Nay, Madam, ſays the other, that's true; and you are very much in the right to inſiſt upon it, if it be ſo; and, no doubt, your father will be far from offering any thing that may ſeem to be a violence upon your conſcience.

I offer violence, Madam! ſays the father, nay, they are above that; they take upon them to ſay, I will, and I won't, to their father; I aſſure you they are paſt my offering violence to them.

In nothing, Madam, but this crabbed buſineſs of marrying, ſays the daughter, and there indeed we do take ſome liberty with my father.

Well, Sir, ſays the old lady, you muſt allow liberty there: marriage is a caſe for life, and muſt be well conſidered; and the young ladies are to bear it,

fall it how it will, you know, for better or worſe; they had need to be allowed ſome liberty there.

Beſides, Madam, ſays the youngeſt, all the liberty we take is in negatives only; we don't offer to take any body that my father don't like, only we don't care to take ſuch a one as we don't like ourſelves.

The old gentleman then put in: Upon my word, Sir, ſays he, I think your daughters are in the right; for certainly, though we may refuſe to let them marry where they may chuſe, yet I can't think we ſhould deny them the liberty to refuſe what we may offer; or elſe we may as well give them in marriage, as was done in old days, and never let them ſee one another.

The eldeſt ſiſter turned her head towards her father at this, but ſaid nothing.

I underſtand you, Betty, ſays her father: but ſhe ſaid nothing ſtill; and the old lady, finding the diſcourſe pinched a little hard, begun ſome other talk, and ſoon after, the men withdrawing, left the ladies together.

When the men were gone; Hark ye, ſays the old gentlewoman, I was willing to break off the diſcourſe juſt now, becauſe I was afraid it was offenſive to your father; but pray let me talk a little more to you, Madam; I fully approve the reſolution of your youngeſt ſiſter, but methinks yours is a little uncharitable, ſpeaking to the eldeſt.

Eld. Si. I was very much obliged to you, Madam, for breaking off the diſcourſe; for my father is paſſionate, and is ſometimes ſo out of temper with us upon theſe points, that we are greatly grieved at it, and particularly that he will not give us leave to ſpeak.

Yo. Si. I am ſure it has almoſt broke my heart.

Old La. I am very ſorry for it; for indeed I think yours is nothing but what every woman that is a

Chriſtian ought to think herſelf obliged to: what dreadful doings muſt there be, when a religious woman marries a wretch that is a deſpiſer of God! A Chriſtian to be linked to an Infidel! one that ſerves God to be joined to one of God's enemies! and then to love ſuch a man too! the very thought is enough to fill one with confuſion! take it which way you will, it is equally dismal. Firſt, to be married to him, and not to love him, that's a hell upon earth! and to love him! one that we muſt reflect on as a limb of the devil! a ſon of perdition! to embrace one that God abhors! to have the affections bound to one that God hates! what contradictions are theſe! what horror muſt fill the ſoul while they live! and what dreadful thoughts muſt croud into one's mind, if ſuch a man ſhould come to die before us! dear young lady, ſays ſhe, you are happy that you could defend yourſelf againſt ſuch a propoſal.

Eld. Si. But, Madam, your charge upon me is a little hard; I think the arguments are as ſtrong almoſt on my part as my ſiſter's, though they are of another nature.

Old La. No, I can't ſay ſo, Madam; it is true, there is ſomething to be ſaid in your caſe, but nothing ſo eſſential as in the other; and as I ſaid, methinks it looks as if you wanted charity: I hope, child, you do not think all opinions but your own are fatal to be profeſſed.

Eld. Si. No, Madam, not at all; I hope there are good people of all perſuaſions; but if I did not think my own beſt, how could I anſwer the cleaving to it myſelf?

Old La. So far you are right.

Eld. Si. Then, Madam, though in charity I ought to allow others to be good Chriſtians, and that I ſhould, and do keep up a friendly correſpondence with many who diſſent from my judgment in

religious matters, yet there is a great deal of difference between charity to them, and union with them.

Old La. You have ſtudied the point thoroughly, I perceive; I underſtand you perfectly; pray go on.

Eld. Si. Madam, in diſcourſe with my father, I could never uſe any freedom, or obtain leave to propoſe my ſcruples, with the reaſons of them; but I hope you will allow me liberty.

Old La. With all my heart, for I am glad to enter into ſo curious a debate with you.

Eld. Si. Religion, Madam, without doors is one thing, religion within doors is another. In the town among my acquaintance, and in the neighbourhood, a due charity to every one is what I think the Chriſtian principle calls for, and I converſe freely with good people of every opinion, extending charity to all, in lowlineſs of mind, eſteeming every one better than myſelf: but within doors the caſe alters; family-religion is a ſociable thing, and God ſhould be worſhipped there with one heart, and with one voice; there can be no ſeparation there, without a dreadful breach both of charity and duty.

Old La. You ſtart a new thing to me, indeed, and it is ſomewhat ſurpriſing.

Eld. Si. It may be true, Madam, that there may be divers opinions in a nation, without breach of charity; but I believe it impoſſible it ſhould be ſo in a family, without breach of affection: what union, what oneneſs of deſires, what perfect agreement (without which man and wife can never be ſaid to diſcharge the duty of their relation) can there be where there is a diverſity of worſhip, a claſhing of opinions, and an oppoſition of principles?

Old La. But, child, you carry it too high: if they differ in principles indeed, there is ſomething to be ſaid; but we are talking of a difference in

opinion only, where the fundamentals may be the ſame.

Eld. Si. Madam, I recall the word principles then, and join with you to confine it to opinion only; but it is the ſame thing in its proportion: the union can never be perfect, while the differing ſentiments of things leave room for diſputes between them; for example, Madam, the differing forms of worſhip; one will pray by a book only, the other without a book wholly; this is as light a difference as can be ſpoken of. But how ſhall God be worſhipped with the united voice and affections of the whole family even in this caſe? what helps will two ſuch relations be to one another, in praying to God by themſelves, or with their families?

Old La. Upon my word, you ſenſibly affect me now with it.

Eld. Si. It is not enough, Madam, that they being ſincerely religious apart, ſhall worſhip God in their own ſeparate way, though better ſo than not at all; but the zeal, the affection, the uniting their hearts in their worſhip, their praying with and for one another; this alas! is all loſt. Then ſay it be in the public worſhip, there they make a woful ſeparation; God, that has made them one, is ſerved by them as two; God has joined them together, and they part aſunder in their ſerving him: God has made them one, and yet they cannot worſhip him as one: how does this conſiſt, Madam?

Old La. I ſee you are full of it.

Eld. Si. In their public worſhip, ſacraments, *&c.* neither one heart or one voice goes with their worſhip: though they communicate in the ſame ordinance, they ſet up two altars; one worſhips here, and one there; and though their faces are both ſet heavenwards, perhaps they turn back to back as ſoon as they get out of their doors to the public worſhip of God.

Old La. You are very clear indeed, Madam.

Eld Si. This is not all, Madam; there are ſeveral family-circumſtances beſides theſe, which make union of opinion abſolutely neceſſary: as firſt, family-worſhip is a thing, without which families, however privately and ſeparately devout, are coupled with Heathens, Jer. x. 25. *Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen, and upon the families which call not upon thy name?* Whatever there may be in public worſhip, there ſhould always be an exact harmony in private; and how can this be, where either of them diſſents from the manner? If there is a diſcord in the manner, there can be no concord in the performance, no union in the affections; in a word, their prayers will be hindered; and who would be thus unequally yoked?

Old La. I expected you would name that ſcripture, though it is certain that was ſpoken principally to thoſe who married with unbelievers, which is a different caſe.

Eld. Si. Well, Madam, but come to another caſe: Suppoſe the huſband and wife we are ſpeaking of, have children, what foundation of eternal ſchiſm is there in the family! Some of the children adhere to the father, ſome to the mother: ſome worſhip in this mount, and ſome no where but at Jeruſalem; ſome go with the father, ſome with the mother; ſome kneel down with the father, ſome with the mother; till, as they grow up, they really learn not to kneel down at all: family-education, united inſtruction, caution, example, they are all dreadfully mangled and divided, till in the end they come to nothing; and the children grow out of government, paſt inſtruction, and are all loſt. Theſe, Madam, are ſome of the reaſons I would have given my father, (if he would have had patience with me,) why, in this late propoſal he had

to make, I desired that I might be at liberty to chuse by my own principles, and not at random, as too many do.

Old La. But, Madam, do you not allow, that if both parties are sincerely pious and religious, they may make allowances to one another, and make conscience of hindering and pulling back one another in the duties of religion?

Eld. Si. Truly, Madam, as to that, two things offer to my view, for I have often considered them both: First, the more sincere in religion either of them are, the more fixed in principle and opinion 'tis likely they will be, and the farther from making abatements to one another: and especially, secondly, in the great article of educating and instructing their children; for what tender mother, that having fixed her opinion, as she thinks, in the best manner and way, could bear not to have her children brought up in the same sentiments of religion, which she thinks most agreeable to the revealed will of God? And the more conscientious and religious she was, the more steadily she would cleave to it as her duty; and the like of the man: so that here would be a constant heart-burning and uneasiness.

Old La. Truly, Madam, I think your reasons good, and you guard them so well with such self-evident conclusions, that I cannot think your father can desire you to break through them: If you think it will be for your service, I'll mention it again to him.

Eld. Si. If you do, Madam, I desire to be absent; for he will not bear it from me.

Old. La. Let me alone for that.

[When the old lady had done this conversation, she began to call for her husband and the father; so the young ladies withdrew. When she was come

to them, ſhe applied herſelf to the father and her huſband in a few words.]

Wife. Upon my word, ſays ſhe to her huſband, this young lady has more religion than all of us, and a clearer ſight into the particular parts of a religious life, than any that ever I met with before.

Fa. Why, ſays the father, have you had a battle with my Betty?

Wife. No, upon my word, we have had no battles; I have not been able to open my mouth againſt one word ſhe ſays; ſhe is able to run down a whole ſociety of doctors in theſe points: I am a perfect convert to all ſhe ſays; and though I wiſh from my ſoul my ſon had ſuch a wife, yet I would not for the world they ſhould come together at the price of putting the leaſt violence upon ſuch noble principles, ſo ſolidly eſtabliſhed, and ſo firmly adhered to; and defy all mankind to confute her.

Hus. You prompt my curioſity; I wiſh you could tell us a little of the ſtory.

Wife. A little! I can eaſily repeat it to you, it is impoſſible I ſhould forget it: but it may be, you, Sir, turning to the father, may not care to hear it.

Fa. Yes, yes; I would very willingly hear it, though I did not care to hear it from her.

Wife. Well then ——— [Here ſhe gives them a full account of the diſcourſe above.]

Hus. I never heard any thing more ſolid, and intimating a thorough ſenſe of religion in my life; I wiſh my ſon and ſhe were both of the ſame opinion then; for a woman of ſuch principles can never be fatally miſtaken in opinion.

Fa. I confeſs I would never give her an opportunity to explain herſelf thus with me; but I aſſure you I am ſo moved with it, that I will never offer to impoſe upon her again.

Wife. Then you ſee, Sir, it was an error to be ſo angry with your child, as not to hear her; I fear you have done ſo with both of them.

Fa. Truly I have; but I ſay now I have been wrong to them both; and indeed more to my youngeſt daughter, than to my eldeſt: for ſhe refuſed the gentleman becauſe he really had no religion at all, and yet I was in a violent paſſion with her.

Wife. Nay, that was hard indeed; for if there be all this to be ſaid, why a woman ſhould not marry a man of a different opinion in religion, there muſt be much more to be ſaid why ſhe ſhould not marry one that deſpiſes religion; and this indeed I ſaid to your youngeſt daughter, applauding her conduct, though I did not know that you had uſed her hardly on that account.

Fa. I would be obliged to you, Madam, to let me know what diſcourſe you had with her too, for that affair is ſtill depending.

Wife. With all my heart; my diſcourſe was not long. ——

[She repeats what ſhe had ſaid to the youngeſt daughter.]

Fa. Indeed, Madam, you are right; the thing is ſo indeed; but he was a pretty gentleman, and had a very noble eſtate, and I was mightily pleaſed with the thoughts of the match, and that made me more paſſionate with the child than I ſhould otherwiſe have been.

Wife. But how came ſhe to know he was ſuch a one?

Fa. Truly his own folly too; he told her ſo directly, in ſo many words; owned he had not troubled his head about religion, and did not intend it; made a banter and jeſt of religion in general; told

her, it was a road he had never travelled, and that he intended to chuſe a wife firſt, and then, perhaps, he might chuſe his religion.

Wife. Nay, then either he had no conduct, or no affection for her.

Fa. As to the laſt; he not only profeſſed a great deal of affection, but choſe her out from the reſt; and you know ſhe is the youngeſt, (for I deſigned my eldeſt for him), and made her the particular miſtreſs of his choice; and I verily believe loved her very well; nay the girl cannot deny but ſhe had a kindneſs for him; and indeed he is a moſt lovely gentleman.

Wife. She has acted a noble part indeed, and the more affection ſhe really had for him, the more of a Chriſtian ſhe has ſhewn in her conduct.

Fa. So you would ſay indeed, if you knew all her conduct, and knew the perſon too.

Wife. If it be not improper, I ſhould be glad to know the perſon.

Fa. Madam, I ſhould be loath to name him to his prejudice; and if you think it will be ſo, I hope you will let it go no further.

Wife. I promiſe it ſhall never go out of my mouth without your leave.

Fa. Why, it is young Mr ——, a gentleman I believe you have heard of.

Wife. Heard of him! We know him intimately well; but I am ſurpriſed at it, upon an account that I believe will ſurpriſe you too.

Fa. What can that be?

Wife. Why, it is true, that gentleman had no religion: poor gentleman! he came of a moſt unhappy ſtock; there never was any religion in the family: but yet this may be ſaid of him, he was a modeſt, ſober, well-behaved gentleman; you never heard an ill word come out of his mouth, nor found any indecent action in his behaviour.

Fa. That's true, and I thought that a great matter, as the youth go now.

Wife. But I can tell you more news than that of him; he is become the moſt pious, ſerious, religious gentleman in the country.

Fa. You ſurpriſe me indeed, now.

Wife. I aſſure you, it is no copy of his countenance; it is known, and he is valued and honoured for it by all the gentlemen round him, and he behaves himſelf with ſo much humility, ſo much ſerious gravity, that, in ſhort, it is the wonder and ſurpriſe of all that know him.

Fa. Pray, how long has this alteration appeared in him?

Wife. About three months, I believe.

Fa. I wiſh you had told my daughter this.

Wife. It was impoſſible I ſhould have brought ſuch a thing in, that knew nothing of the circumſtance.

Fa. Nay, if you had, ſhe would not have believed a word of it; on the contrary, ſhe would have taken it all for a trick of mine, and that I had invited you hither on purpoſe to bring on ſuch a ſtory.

Wife. Let me alone for that againſt another time. I hope you will give the young ladies leave to return this viſit. I deſign to invite them to come and ſee me.

[Upon this foot the diſcourſe ended for that time; and all thoughts of the match for the eldeſt daughter with the ſon of that gentlewoman being laid aſide for the preſent, the old lady, at parting, in a very friendly manner, invited the young ladies to her houſe, and they promiſed to come, and the father ſaid aloud, he would come and bring them.

It was not long before the young ladies put their father in mind of his appointment; for being mighti-

ly pleaſed with the old gentlewoman, they had a great mind to pay the viſit, that the acquaintance might be ſettled. Their father appointed the next day: but being interrupted juſt at the time he intended to go, he cauſed them to go without him, and ſend the coach back for him to come after them when his buſineſs was done.

While they were here, the good old gentlewoman, who entertained them with great civility, diverted them with every thing ſhe could think of; and after abundance of other uſeful chat, they fell to talking the old ſtories over again about religious huſbands, and the neceſſity there was to have both huſband and wife join their endeavours for propagating family-religion. The youngeſt daughter repeated her mother's maxim; Madam, ſays ſhe, it was a rule my mother gave us at her death, and which I ſee ſo much weight in, that I deſire to make it the foundation upon which I would build all my proſpects of happineſs, *viz. That a religious life is the only heaven upon earth.* I have added ſome other things to it ſince, which my own obſervation directs me to, but which I believe you will allow to be in their degree juſt, ſuch as theſe, *viz.* That a religious family is one of the greateſt comforts of a religious life: that where both huſband and wife are not mutually, at leaſt, if not equally religious, there can never be truly a religious family: that therefore for a religiouſly-inclined woman to marry an irreligious huſband, is to entail perſecution upon herſelf as long as ſhe lives. The old lady replied, I find, Madam, as young as you are, you have ſtudied this point very well. Indeed, Madam, ſaid the eldeſt ſiſter, my ſiſter has had occaſion for it; for ſhe has been hard put to it, what with the offers of an extraordinary match, my father's violent paſſion, and (among ourſelves, Madam) not a little the importu-

nity of her own affections, that, for my part, I muſt confeſs, I wonder ſhe has been able to ſtand her ground. They are three powerful arguments, I acknowledge, ſaid the old lady; pray, Madam, as far as it may be proper, let me know ſomething of the manner; you need not mention perſons; I am not inquiſitive on that ſcore, I aſſure you. If my ſiſter give me leave, Madam, ſays the eldeſt; the youngeſt ſaid, ſhe left her at liberty. Why then, Madam, ſays ſhe, my father—— [Here ſhe gives her an abridgment of the whole ſtory, but without the moſt extravagant part of her father's paſſion, that it might not reflect upon him.]

Well, Madam, ſays ſhe, I will not ſay all my thoughts on this ſurpriſing ſtory, becauſe your ſiſter is here; for it is a rule with me, never to praiſe any one to their face, or reproach any behind their backs; but it is an extraordinary ſtory indeed; and, turning to the youngeſt ſiſter, ſhe ſaid to her very ſeriouſly, I pray God fortify you, child, in ſuch reſolutions, and grant that you may have the true end of them fully anſwered; that, if ever you do marry, it may be to a man as uncommonly ſerious, pious, and ſincere, as you have been inimitably reſolute in refuſing ſuch great offers, for the want of it. Then, turning to her eldeſt ſiſter, ſays ſhe, this ſurpriſing ſtory puts me in mind of another ſtory, which a very good man, an old acquaintance of ours, told me the other day, and which, they ſay, has juſt now happened to a young gentleman that he knows in the country; it is a pretty way off too, but he told us his name; I believe my huſband knows the name, and I will tell you the ſtory for your ſiſter's encouragement: who knows but ſhe may be the means, by ſuch unexampled conduct, as this of her's is, bring the gentleman ſhe has had upon her hands to ſome ſenſe of his condition?

There is a gentleman in that country, of a very good family, and of a very great eſtate, but young, and I think he ſaid, a batchelor; he is not above ſix and twenty, and has between two or three thouſand a-year; it ſeems he is a moſt accompliſhed well-bred man, a handſome charming perſon; and every thing that could be ſaid of a man, to ſet him out, he ſaid of him: he had, indeed, been of a family, he ſaid, that had been eminently wicked, ſo that the very name of religion had ſcarce been heard of among them for ſome ages; and young Maſter, ſaid my friend, could not be ſaid well to be worſe than his father and grandfather who went before him.

However, it happened, it ſeems, that he went to London, I think, ſays ſhe, my friend ſaid it was laſt winter; and when he came back, he was ſtrangely melancholy and dejected, and quite altered in his converſation; inſtead of riding abroad and viſiting the gentlemen, and receiving viſits from them, he ſhunned all company, walked about his gardens and woods all alone till very late in the night, and all his ſervants wondered what ailed him; that one night they were in a great fright for him, knowing he was out on foot and alone; when, about ten o'clock at night he came in, with a poor, honeſt country fellow with him, that lived almoſt three miles off: that the next day he took that poor man home to his houſe, and ſent for his wife and children, who all lived before in a a poor cottage on the waſte, and provided for them; gave the poor man a farm rent-free for twelve years, which always went for 22 l. a-year, with a good houſe; lent him a ſtock for manuring it too, and made him bailiff of the manor; and, in ſhort, made a man of him. Whereupon, every body ſaid, that the ſquire had been in ſome great danger or other, and the poor

man had ſaved his life; and when ſomebody happened to ſay as much to him one day, he anſwered, Yes, that poor man had done more than ſaved his life, for he had ſaved his ſoul.

It ſeems, this poor labouring wretch, though miſerable to the laſt degree, as to this world, was yet known to be a moſt religious ſerious Chriſtian, and a very modeſt, humble, but knowing and ſenſible man, and he had been diſcourſing good things with him, and from that time forward the poor man was ſcarce ever from him; that it was obſerved by ſome of the ſervants, that the next morning after the poor man came home with him, he came again and brought a Bible with him, which was left in the young gentleman's chamber, and that this poor man and he were often locked up an hour or two together, almoſt every day; that next market-day the poor man went to the next market-town, upon ſome buſineſs for the gentleman, and brought home a new Bible, and ſeveral other religious books, and that his maſter was continually reading them; in ſhort, our friend tells us, ſaid ſhe, that he is become the moſt ſober, religious Chriſtian, that, for a man of his fortune and quality, has ever been heard of, and that he is admired by all the country for it.

I tell you this ſtory, Madam, turning to the youngeſt ſiſter, to confirm you in your reſolution, and to let you ſee, that there are ſome religious gentlemen in the world ſtill, and that the gentlemen may be aſhamed, when they pretend to ſay religion is below their quality; for my friend ſays, that this gentleman is, with his religion, alſo the humbleſt, ſweeteſt-tempered creature in the world, ready to do good offices to the pooreſt of the country, and yet mannerly and agreeably pleaſant with the greateſt; and his family is a little pattern of virtue to all round them.

Ay, Madam, ſays the eldeſt, it is ſuch a gentleman my ſiſter would have. But, ſays her ſiſter, where are they to be found? I never expect it. Pray, Madam, ſays the eldeſt ſiſter, in what part of the world does this black ſwan, this unheard-of, non-ſuch thing of a gentleman live? I really forget the place, Madam, ſays the old lady, but it is ſomewhere in Hampſhire.

She perceived, at that word, both the young ladies changed a little, and looked at one another; ſo ſhe turned her diſcourſe off to ſome other ſubject, and left them in the dark, as to the name of the gentleman; for ſhe perceived they both gueſſed at it, or ſuſpected it.

When they had taken their leave, and the two ſiſters were in the coach coming home, ſays the eldeſt ſiſter to the other, Did you obſerve Mrs B——'s ſtory of the gentleman in Hampſhire? Yes, ſays the other, I did; and I believe you fancy it is the ſame perſon we know of. It is very true, ſays the eldeſt, I did think ſo, all the while ſhe was telling the ſtory; and I expected ſhe would name him, but I was loath to aſk her his name. I am glad you didn't, ſays the other, for I know no good it can be to me to hear it, one way or other, now he is gone. Why, would not you be glad to know that he was really ſuch a one as ſhe has deſcribed? ſays the eldeſt. Yes, truly, for his own ſake I ſhould, ſaid her ſiſter; but it is nothing to me now; I had rather never have him mentioned at all to me, upon any occaſion whatever.

After they were come home, their father, who had been engaged all the while, had ſent the coach back for them, with an excuſe for his not coming, was very inquiſitive to know of them, what diſcourſe they had had; and, his eldeſt daughter telling him one ſtory and another ſtory, he would cry,

Well, was that all? For he expected ſhe had broke the thing to them. No, ſays the eldeſt, ſhe told us a ſtrange ſtory in Hampſhire; and with that repeated the paſſage word for word. Her father took no notice of it at that time; but two or three days after, as they were at ſupper, he ſays to his eldeſt daughter, Betty, who do you think the gentleman in Hampſhire is, that Mrs B—— told you the ſtory of? I cannot tell, ſays ſhe; pray, who was it? Even as I thought when you told of it, ſaid her father, for I had heard ſomething of it before; it is nobody elſe but Mr ———, the ſame your wife ſiſter there thought fit to treat with ſo much ill manners.

Nay, Sir, ſays the eldeſt, do not ſay my ſiſter treated him with ill manners; for he owns the contrary to that himſelf: But how are you ſure of it, Sir, that it is he? Why, I have had the ſtory, ſays her father, from her huſband, who is greatly affected with it, and he named his name to me, not knowing in the leaſt, that I knew any thing of him.

Truly, ſays the eldeſt, I am very glad of it for his ſake; but it does not ſignify a farthing to her now; for, if he was to come to her again to-morrow, with all his ſobriety and reformation about him, ſhe would have nothing to ſay to him.

Why ſo, child, ſays the father, did you not own ſhe loved him? Yes, ſays the daughter, before ſhe came to know what a creature he was. Well then, ſays the father, if that be removed, and he is become another man, ſhe will love him again; for ſhe had no other objection againſt him, had ſhe? No, Sir, ſays the daughter, ſhe had no other objection. But but ſhe will never believe him, let his pretences to religion be what they will. Why ſo? ſays the father. Becauſe, Sir, he told her, that if he had known her mind, he would have pretended to a world of reformation and religion, and that he did not doubt but he could be hypocrite enough to cheat her.

Nay, if he has been ſo fooliſh, I know not what to ſay to it, ſays the father; let it reſt as it is: if ſhe will not have him, whether he be religious or not religious, then the objection of his being not religious was a ſham and a cloak, and ſhe ſtands out in mere obſtinacy againſt her own intereſt, purely to affront her father; let her go on, till ſhe comes to be convinced by her own misfortune; I'll meddle no more about it.

The eldeſt ſiſter failed not to relate this ſtory very particularly to her ſiſter, who, very gravely muſing on the particulars, anſwered her ſiſter thus, after ſeveral other ſober and religious expreſſions:

Dear ſiſter, ſays ſhe, this thing has been affliction enough to me; but my father's conduct has always made it double; becauſe he cannot talk of it without reſentment and unkindneſs: if it be really ſo, that this is the gentleman Mrs B —— told us the ſtory of yeſterday, I ſhould rejoice; nay, though I am loth to be cheated, and what he ſaid of playing the hypocrite with me, has made me the more backward to give credit to outſides; yet, were I ſure it was a real work of God in him, and that he was become a religious gentleman, you know I have affection enough to rejoice on my own account, and to entertain him after another manner than before: but yet two things make it ſtill remote from me: Firſt, that I have no demonſtration of the truth of the fact: and, ſecondly, that, if it is ſo, he has made no ſtep towards me, and perhaps never may; and you know, ſiſter, continued ſhe, it is no buſineſs of mine, till he does.

Why, that's true, ſays the eldeſt ſiſter; but what muſt be done then?

Done! ſays ſhe, let it alone; let it reſt, till we hear ſomething or other of it in the ordinary way of ſuch things.

But what muſt we do with my father? ſays the eldeſt, for he is always talking to me about it.

Do! ſays the other, give the ſame anſwer to him from me, as I do to you.

Then, ſays the eldeſt, I am ſure he will never reſt, till he bring it about again; for he is ſtrangely intent upon it.

Let that be as pleaſes God, I will be wholly neuter, ſays the youngeſt ſiſter.

Some time after this diſcourſe, the father, having ſome occaſion for his health, went down to Bath, and taking all his daughters with him, they continued there ſome months; in which time they contracted an acquaintance with a lady and her two daughters, who came thither from Hampſhire. The old lady had been a widow of a gentleman of quality, by whom ſhe had had two daughters, but was now married to an eminent clergyman in the country where ſhe lived; and they were all together at the Bath, and lodged in the ſame apartments with theſe ladies.

It happened one day after dinner, talking freely together about marrying religious huſbands and wives; the eldeſt daughter, as what is always much upon the mind will be, in proportion, much upon the tongue, inſiſted in diſcourſe upon the miſery of unequal matches, and how unhappy it was, either to huſband or wife, when a religious, pious, ſincere Chriſtian, whether man or woman, was married to another, who had no ſenſe of religion; and ſhe gives a long account of a relation of her father's, but without naming their aunt, how good a huſband ſhe had in all other reſpects, how comfortably and pleaſantly they lived, but only for that one thing: and then ſhe told them, (ſtill without naming any body), how many odd tricks Sir James ſerved his lady, and the like.

Well, Madam, ſays the old clergyman, I can tell you ſuch a ſtory of a lady in our county, as I believe you never heard the like. I do not know the woman, ſays the Doctor, but I know the gentleman intimately well, and have had a great deal of religious converſation with him, upon the occaſion I ſhall tell you of.

He courted a young lady, ſays the Doctor, but, whether ſhe lived in our county, or the city, or where, he is perfectly mute, only that he often tells her Chriſtian name; and, ſeeing he ſeems reſolved to conceal her perſon, no body will be ſo rude to preſs him on that head.

The gentleman, ſays the Doctor, is of a very good family, has a noble eſtate, a comely perſon, and a complete courtly education, and till this happened, was almoſt always at London.

His miſtreſs muſt be little leſs than an angel in human ſhape, by his deſcription: but that we give no heed to; for, Madam, ſays the old Doctor, you know, men in love give themſelves a liberty that way: but however, after all things were agreed, and the writings drawing, it ſeems, ſhe threw him off entirely, and refuſed him merely becauſe ſhe found he was a man of no religion.

Says the eldeſt ſiſter, How could ſhe know that, Sir? he was not ſo fooliſh to tell her ſo himſelf, I ſuppoſe.

Yes, ſays the Doctor, he did. Why then, ſays the ſiſter, I ſuppoſe he was very indifferent whether he had her or no. Indeed, ſays the Doctor, one would think ſo, and I ſaid ſo to him; but he told me, that it was ſo far from that, that he had taken up his reſolution never to have any other woman, if ſhe were the richeſt, beſt and moſt beautiful creature alive.

Then, perhaps, the lady has a ſuperior fortune to

him, beſides her other qualifications, ſays the ſiſter. No, juſt the contrary, ſays the Doctor. But, Madam, ſays he, I'll tell you the hiſtory of this gentleman, if it is not too long for you; it is a ſtory cannot be unprofitable to any one to hear, eſpecially to you, ladies, who have taken up ſuch happy reſolutions about marrying none but religious huſbands. The ladies bowed, in token they deſired him to go on with the ſtory. So the Doctor went on.

Nothing touched this gentleman ſo near, ſays he, after he was gone from his miſtreſs, as to reflect what kind of a wretch or monſter he was, that a virtuous young lady, and one who he had reaſon to believe had no diſlike of him, ſhould be afraid to marry him for fear of being ruined, and that ſhe ſhould think, if ſhe took him, ſhe declared war againſt Heaven, and renounced all pretenſions of duty to her Maker. —— [Here he related the whole ſtory, his talk with himſelf, the diſcourſe at the chocolate houſe, his retreat into the country, his happening to hear the poor countryman at prayer, his converſation with him upon the way, and his conduct afterward, all in the manner as related before.]

We muſt ſuppoſe the ſiſters to have much leſs ſenſe of religion than they were known to have, and particularly leſs ſenſe of the caſe itſelf, in which it was eaſy to know they were nearly concerned, if they were not very much moved with the particulars of this ſtory; and no ſooner had the Doctor finiſhed his relation, with ſome very handſome reflections upon it, but the ſiſters longed to withdraw, to compare their own thoughts together, where they could do it with freedom.

But the eldeſt daughter went farther; for though perhaps her curioſity was not greater than her ſiſter's, yet as her courage was greater, and her con-

cern in it leſs, ſhe was reſolved to get the name of this gentleman, if poſſible; accordingly, at length, ſhe aſked the Doctor, if the name of this gentleman was a ſecret? No, Madam, ſays the Doctor, the whole neighbourhood know the ſtory in general, and it is nothing at all to his diſhonour. No, indeed, Sir, ſays ſhe, but juſt the contrary; and if it was otherwiſe, I would not have aſked his name. Indeed, Madam, ſays the Doctor, his name is no ſecret; it is Mr ——, the eldſt ſon of Sir Thomas ———, by whom he enjoys an eſtate of 2000 l. a-year, and after his uncle, who is very old, he has near 1000 l. a-year more entailed upon him.

The two ſiſters had heard too much to hold any longer; the youngeſt eſpecially, who pretending ſome indiſpoſition, withdrew, and her ſiſter ſoon after: when her ſiſter came to her, ſhe ſaid, Well, child, what do you ſay to this ſtory? there is no room to think there can be any deſign in this old gentleman, or any hypocriſy in the particulars, if they are true.

Her ſiſter ſaid never a word; but ſhe found ſhe had been crying, and that ſhe was ſtill too full of it to ſpeak; ſo ſhe let her alone a while, till, after ſome time fetching a great ſigh, which gave her paſſions ſome vent, ſays the youngeſt, Why, what do you ſay to it? I ſay to it! ſays the eldeſt ſiſter, I can ſay neither leſs or more to it than what the two diſciples ſaid to one another, going to Emmaus, about our Saviour's diſcourſe to them, after he was gone, Did not our hearts burn within us when he talked to us? I am ſure mine did, ſays ſhe; And mine too, ſays the youngeſt. But it is all nothing to me now. Nay, ſays the eldeſt ſiſter, if all the ſtory be true, it may be ſomething to you ſtill; for you ſee, the Doctor ſays, he is reſolved to have no body elſe. I give no heed to that, ſays the youngeſt

ſiſter, for the tables are quite turned now between us, and he ought to refuſe me now, for the very ſame reaſon that I refuſed him before; for I have not religion enough for ſuch a convert as this, I am ſure, any more than a man without any notion of a Deity had religion enough for me. Well; well, ſays her ſiſter, let Providence, which brings all things to paſs its own way, work as he ſees fit; I dare ſay, as my aunt ſaid, we ſhall hear more of it.

They had very little diſcourſe at that time but what ended thus: But the eldeſt ſiſter had a great mind her father ſhould hear the ſtory too, if poſſible, before they left the place; and ſhe reſolved to take an opportunity to bring it about, if ſhe could; but ſhe was happily prevented by the forwardneſs of her father to complain of his daughter's nicety on all occaſions: for in diſcourſe with the Doctor and his lady, the young ladies on both ſides being abſent, he took a liberty to exclaim vehemently, how fooliſh one of his daughters had been, and how ſhe had obſtinately caſt off a gentleman of ſuch and ſuch qualifications, as before. My dear, ſays the Doctor's lady to him, pray tell Mr —— the ſtory you told the young ladies yeſterday: With all my heart, ſaid the Doctor; ſo he repeated the whole ſtory.

The father was exceedingly ſurpriſed at the particulars, but more when the Doctor told him the name of the gentleman. However, he held his tongue, as it happen'd, and did not let the Doctor know how near it related to his family; but in the evening, taking his opportunity, he calls his eldeſt daughter to him, Hark ye, Betty, ſays he, did the Doctor tell you a ſtory t'other day of a gentleman in Hampſhire? Yes, Sir, ſays ſhe. And was your ſiſter by? ſays he. Yes, Sir, ſays ſhe. And do you know that this is the ſame Mr —— that we know

of? ſays her father. Yes, Sir, ſays ſhe, he told us his name. Well, and what does your ſiſter ſay to it? ſays he. She ſays little, Sir, ſays his daughter; but ſhe cannot but be moved with it; for 'tis a ſurpriſing ſtory. I dare ſay, ſays her father, I ſhall hear of him again; ſhe won't turn him off again, I hope; I am ſure ſhe does not deſerve him now. She ſays ſo herſelf, ſays the daughter, That he ought to refuſe her now, for the ſame reaſon that ſhe refuſed him. Well, ſays the father, we ſhall certainly hear of him again; I am fully perſuaded he will have no reſt till he comes to ſee her again.

A few weeks after this they returned to London, and the eldeſt ſiſter being impatient to ſee her aunt, and to give her ſome account of theſe things, they went both away to Hampſtead. When they came thither, ſhe failed not to give her aunt a particular account of all theſe paſſages, as well that which had happen'd at their viſit to the merchant's lady in London, as what had happen'd at the Bath; all which, but eſpecially the laſt, were wonderfully ſurpriſing and agreeable to their aunt. Well, niece, ſays the aunt to the youngeſt ſiſter, what do you think of theſe things? I can ſay little to them, Madam, ſays ſhe; I am glad, for his ſake, that God has open'd his eyes. But is it no ſatisfaction to you, child, ſays her aunt, that you have been ſo far the inſtrument of it? Alas! Madam, ſays ſhe, I the inſtrument! I have been none of the inſtrument, not I. Yes, yes, replies her aunt, you have, and he acknowledges it too: And turning to the eldeſt ſiſter, ſays ſhe, I think, child, now you may perform your promiſe, and tell your ſiſter what he ſaid to you when he called here as he went out of town. Yes, Madam, ſays ſhe, ſo I think too. [Here ſhe gives her ſiſter a full account of what he had ſaid, as before.]

I think you might have told me this before, ſays the youngeſt ſiſter. Nay, ſiſter, replied ſhe, did you not take me ſhort, and forbid me telling you any thing, and withdrew out of the room, and bid me tell it my aunt? Why, that's true, I did ſo, ſays ſhe again, and I have been ſo confus'd, that I know not when I do well, and when I do ill. Indeed, niece, ſays her aunt, I alſo obliged her not to tell you; for I concluded, if there was any thing in it, we ſhould hear of it again; and if we did not, it could do you no ſervice.

While they were talking thus, a coach ſtopt at the door, and a ſervant brought word, their father and another gentleman with him was below ſtairs.

It will be neceſſary here to leave this part awhile, and bring forward the ſtory of the youug gentleman as far as it is needful to the coherence of things; the ſtory alſo will be very ſhort.

The young gentleman having, as has been ſaid, taken his new tutor, the poor countryman, into the houſe with him, received ſo much aſſiſtance from his advice, and had daily ſuch inſtruction in religious things, from the wholeſome plain counſels of this humble poor creature, that the benefit of them ſoon appear'd in his converſation, and his reformation ſoon became viſible in the general courſe of his life: he kept company with the ſobereſt, graveſt, and moſt religious perſons that he could find; he kept a moſt ſober, regular, reformed family; and ſeeming to reſolve to reſide pretty much there, for the better government of his family, he took in a young miniſter of an extraordinary good character to be his chaplain, and cauſed every ſervant who appeared diſorderly or vitious to be put away out of his houſe.

Theſe, as the natural conſequences of a ſincere work upon his own mind, were the viſible product of that bleſſed change, and indeed an agreeable evidence

of the ſincerity of it; but they were far from being the ſum of things; for, in a word, he proved to be a moſt pious ſincere Chriſtian in all his ways; and as this was attended with a natural ſweetneſs in his diſpoſition, modeſty and generoſity in his manner, and an excellent temper, free from all manner of pride or hypocriſy, it made him perfectly agreeable to all ſorts of people; thoſe who were not like him valued and honoured him, and the ſober, religious part of men were delighted in him beyond expreſſion.

He went on thus for near two years, liv'd generally in the country; and if he came to London, as occaſion required, yet it appeared that his choice was rather for the country; eſpecially, becauſe he could not be long from his faithful aſſiſtant the poor countryman, who was upon all occaſions, as we may ſay, clerk of the cloſet to him, and with whom he kept up a moſt religious, but ſecret converſation, and had retirements with him, which none were acquainted with but themſelves.

But in all this enjoyment of himſelf, and the retir'd life he had now plac'd his delight in, he found ſomething ſtill wanting too, as well to complete his happineſs here, as to forward his progreſs in things of an eternal and durable nature; and he began to ſay to himſelf, that he had robb'd himſelf of much of his comfort, in neglecting ſo long to have the aſſiſtance of that bleſſed creature, whom God had made the firſt inſtrument to touch his mind with a ſenſe of good things.

Theſe thoughts dwelt upon his heart a great while, and he found himſelf very uneaſy; it occur'd to him, that certainly, as it had pleaſed God to make that young woman give him the alarm, and ſtrike his ſoul with the firſt ſenſe of his wretched condition, he had certainly furniſhed her for his farther aſſiſtance, and made her capable of giving him further

help, light, and directions in his duty; and that he ſtood in the way of his own comforts all the while he was without her; nay, that he ſeemed to reject the inſtrument by which God had done him ſo much good, without inquiring whether God had deſigned her for his farther benefit or no.

He reflected how ſuitable a diſpoſition ſhe was of in religious things, to the deſign he had of keeping up a religious family, and how admirable a wife, a mother, a miſtreſs, ſuch a lady muſt needs be to him, and his whole houſe; who now ſaw the truth of the excellent ſentence ſhe had often repeated to him, *viz.* That a religious life was the only heaven upon earth. He diſcourſed all theſe things with his faithful counſellor, poor William, who preſſed him by all the perſuaſions he could uſe to go and make her his own; for it was the only fear, William ſaid, he had for him, that he would marry ſome lady, who, having been brought up in the uſual levity of the times, would pull him backward, rather than forward him in his religious reſolutions.

With theſe thoughts he reſolved to go to London, and apply himſelf immediately to his former miſtreſs, and obtain her for his own, if poſſible; but was exceedingly diſappointed, when he found ſhe and her father, and all the family, were gone to the Bath.

However he waited, and hearing of their return, he went immediately to make his viſit, without any ceremony. When he found ſhe was abroad, he fell to work ſeriouſly with her father; he told him, that the laſt time he was there, he had indeed promiſed to wait on her again, but had not yet done it, for which he was come now to aſk her pardon, and to give her the reaſon of it, and hoped he would give him leave to ſee his daughter again, notwithſtanding what had paſſed. Her father told him, he had received an account how his daughter had us'd him;

that he was in the country when it happened, otherwiſe he ſhould have concern'd himſelf to have ſecured him better treatment; that he had reſented it ſo already to his daughter, that he had ſcarce been in ſpeaking-terms with her ſince; that as to his promiſe of coming again, he believed ſhe was convinced that ſhe had no reaſon to expect it, ſeeing no gentleman would care to be ill-uſed twice upon the ſame occaſion. The young gentleman anſwer'd, that he was very ſorry he ſhould reſent any thing from his daughter on his account; that he was ſurpriſed to hear him ſay ſhe had ill-us'd him; that upon his word ſhe had not done or ſaid the leaſt unbecoming thing to him; that he was even then, when ſhe did it, fully convinced of the reaſonableneſs of what ſhe had ſaid, and ten times as much, if that were poſſible; and alſo of the juſt motives ſhe had to ſay it to him; that if ſhe had done leſs, ſhe would have acted from meaner principles than he knew ſhe was miſtreſs of; and that her reaſons were ſo good, and ſhe ſo well maintained them, that he had neither then, or now, the leaſt thing to offer againſt them; and that his buſineſs was not now to anſwer her arguments, but to ſee if he could comply better with the juſt demands that ſhe then made, than he could before.

The father anſwered with a great many compliments and excuſes, and ſuch like diſcourſes; but the gentleman found, that he neither reliſhed the reaſon of his daughter's refuſal, or was affected at all with all he could ſay to convince him how he had taken it; and modeſty forbidding him to go farther in any declaration about religious matters, eſpecially where he found there was no taſte of it, he declin'd ſaying any more about it; but he turn'd his diſcourſe to deſiring another interview with his daughter upon the terms of former propoſals; which the father conſenting to, they went together in the young gentle-

man's chariot to Hampſtead, where the young ladies were; and this was the gentleman, who, as I obſerv'd, was come to the door with their father, juſt as they were above talking of him with their aunt.

I had given an account before, that they heard a coach ſtop at the gate, and that a ſervant brought up word, that their father, and another gentleman, was below ſtairs: but they were ſurpriſed, you may be ſure, when the eldeſt ſiſter, going down firſt, comes running up ſtairs again, with the news, in ſhort, that it was Mr ——, and that their father had brought him.

The aunt, unwilling her niece ſhould appear in any diſorder, ſays to her, Come, child, you two ſhall ſtay a little, and let me go down firſt; which the youngeſt ſiſter was very glad of. It was eaſy to perceive, and the paſſages already related, will allow us to ſuppoſe, that although it was ſome ſurpriſe to the young lady to have him come thus ſuddenly and abruptly upon her, having not prepared her thoughts, or reſolved upon what reception to give him, and not having the leaſt intimation from her father upon what account he came, yet that ſhe was not alarmed as ſhe uſed to be; the ſcruples of her conſcience were all anſwered; her jealouſies of his hypocriſy were over; and her affection had little or nothing to ſtruggle with now, unleſs ſhe might doubt his reſentment of things paſt, and whether he came upon the old account, or rather to perform his promiſe, and make a viſit of ceremony only: however, ſhe begg'd her ſiſter to ſpeak to her aunt, that they might ſtay at her houſe, and that ſhe might receive his viſits there, becauſe then ſhe would have her aunt to adviſe and conſult with, on every occaſion, and then that ſhe would put off their being left together that night, that ſhe might conſider things a little, and know the better how to receive him.

Her ſiſter went down, and ſending for her aunt into another room, propoſed the firſt to her; Let me alone, niece, for that, ſays ſhe. So the other went up to her ſiſter, and ſoon after the father calling for his two daughters, they went down into the room. It was eaſy for her, at firſt ſight, to perceive, that her lover was not at all alter'd in his affection to her; that he did not come to her with reſentment, or with ceremony; for he flew to her, took her in his arms, and told her, he came to ſee if ſhe had goodneſs enough to pardon his not keeping his word with her, in coming to wait on her again, and alſo to claim her promiſe of ſtaying for him. He ſpoke this ſo ſoftly, as not to be heard by the company, and without expecting any anſwer, turn'd about to pay his reſpects to her aunt; in doing which, he told her, he hoped ſhe would give him leave to wait upon her niece at her houſe.

The aunt took the hint, and turning to the father, Brother, ſays ſhe to him privately, I think, if you would let my niece ſtay here for ſome time, and let the gentleman come to wait on her here, I would take care to prevent ſuch little ſcruples as you know interrupted that affair before, and you will the ſooner bring it to an end, according to your mind. With all my heart, ſays the father; if we had done ſo before, I believe ſhe had not play'd the fool as ſhe did.

Upon this, turning themſelves to the company, ſhe ſays aloud, Niece, I don't intend to loſe your company thus; I ſuppoſe, if this gentleman deſigns to viſit you, he won't think it a great way to come to Hampſtead, which, now the roads are ſo good, is not above an hour's driving; and, I hope, we ſhall not make his entertainment ſo ill, as to make him weary of coming hither. Her niece ſaid, that muſt be as her father pleaſed to direct: I know that, ſaid her aunt: and therefore I have got your father's

conſent already. They bowed both to her, in token of aſſent, and night coming on, her father talk'd of going away; ſo he told her, he would take another opportunity to wait on her, which was what ſhe had deſired. And thus ended their firſt meeting.

They had ſcarce din'd the next day, but, as he had ſaid, he came to viſit her, and they had the whole afternoon to themſelves; and from that day, they began to underſtand one another ſo well, that, in a few weeks, matters began to draw to a cloſe. But, becauſe ſome part of their diſcourſe is neceſſary to finiſh the former account, and may be as uſeful as it is entertaining, I ſhall firſt give ſome of the particulars, as they occur'd in diſcourſe between her and her aunt and ſiſter, upon this occaſion.

As ſhe had advis'd with her ſiſter and aunt upon every particular, and eſpecially with her ſiſter, from the firſt of it; ſo ſhe made no ſcruple to give them a full account of things, as they paſs'd. It was one morning, after the gentleman had been above a week in his new addreſſes, that, coming into her aunt's dreſſing room, ſhe found her ſiſter there drinking coffee with her aunt; and her ſiſter began with her thus:

Eld. Si. Well, ſiſter, you us'd to be free with a body, and tell one now and then how things went with you: now we hear nothing from you: what, is it all to be a ſecret?

Aunt. Nay, niece, you ought not to preſs your ſiſter to give an account of ſuch things.

Eld Si. When ſhe wanted advice, Madam, ſhe was open enough.

Aunt. For my part, I wiſh her as well as I do my own children; but I cannot deſire her to give any account of ſuch things, unleſs ſhe wants advice in any thing; and then ſhe's a judge of that.

Yo. Si. Indeed, Madam, if I have not told any

thing, or every thing, both to you and my ſiſter, it has not been by way of reſerve; I am ready to give you a full account of all you deſire; for there is nothing paſſes between us, that need be conceal'd from you that are ſo near to me. As for my ſiſter, I told her every paſſage before; and as for you, Madam, did I not deſire to be here, that I might conſult and adviſe with you, and have your directions in every ſtep? and I have wonder'd you never aſk'd about it before.

Eld. Si. The chief thing I want to know, is how you find him, as to the grand affair of religion; and whether you think him a hypocrite, or no?

Aunt. Ay, that's what I am curious about.

Yo. Si. I am but an ill judge of ſincerity, eſpecially in a caſe where my inclinations, you know, are partial.

Eld. Si. Why, you were the niceſt creature alive before, ſiſter; and yet, you know, your affections were the ſame way then.

Aunt. Ay, niece, what can you ſay to that?

Yo. Si. Madam, my ſiſter takes it quite wrong.

Eld. Si. How do I take you wrong, ſiſter? did you not conclude him to be an Atheiſt?

Yo. Si. But I never ſaid he was a hypocrite: if he had been no honeſter, than he was politic, I had been effectually deceived; for it was too true, as he ſaid, if he had talk'd a little religiouſly, nay, if he had not openly profeſs'd his contempt of all religion, he had cheated me, and I had never made any objection.

Aunt. That's true; you are right, niece: but how ſtands it now? are all the ſtories you told me you heard at the Bath about him true or no?

Yo. Si. Truly I believe they are.

Eld. Si. Are you but at believe ſtill? I would have had the bottom of them all out by this time; what have you been about all this while?

Yo. Si. Truly, we have ſpent all the time almoſt about the great difficulty of judging whether he is ſincere or a hypocrite; and we are ſcarce got through it yet, I aſſure you.

Eld. Si. Why then I think my ſiſter is mad: what kind of confeſſion of principles do you inſiſt on, pray? I hope you don't ſet up to examine the heart.

Yo. Si. You run all upon miſtakes with me, ſiſter; the diſpute lies juſt the other way; I am for allowing him to be ſincere, but he will not grant that I have any reaſon to do ſo: he ſays, that I ought to believe he is a hypocrite.

Aunt. Come, niece, let us have the whole ſtory of it; we ſhall then know how to judge of it together.

Yo. Si. With all my heart, Madam: you know he came to me laſt Tueſday night, when you firſt left us together. After ſome compliments, he repeated what he had ſaid before, that he come to aſk my pardon for not coming again, as he had ſaid he would. I told him, I did not expect him to come again; and, if I was to believe the opinion of other people, I had uſed him ſo rudely, that it was not reaſonable to think, that any gentleman that was ſo treated, would ever have come again, unleſs it was to affront me. He wonder'd, he ſaid, who could pretend to ſay ſo; for he aſſur'd me, he not only never ſaid I uſed him ill, but never thought ſo, and certainly I would not ſay ſo to any body: for he was perſuaded, he ſaid, that I did neither do it on purpoſe to uſe him ill, or believe it was ill uſage. I told him, he did me a great deal of juſtice to ſay, I did not act on purpoſe to affront him, but that I could not but ſay I thought I had uſed him a little too rudely, for all that; and that if he thought ſo too, I was very ready to take this opportunity to aſk him pardon, without ſo much as naming the neceſſity I was in, on other accounts, for doing what I did.

Aunt. You were very courtly in that particular, niece; pray what did he ſay to it?

Yo. Si. He told me, I had nothing to aſk him pardon for; and aſſured me he had not been gone half an hour from me, before he was convinced of the juſtice of all I had ſaid, and how much reaſon I had to refuſe him, upon the nicety which I had refuſed him upon. He added, that he had a thouſand times ſince reproach'd himſelf with the folly of his own conduct at that time, or that he could think it could recommend him to any woman of virtue and ſenſe, to boaſt of having no thought or ſenſe of religion: for, Madam, ſays he, had you taken no notice of it, I ſhould of neceſſity have concluded, in a quarter of an hour after, that you had no ſenſe of virtue or religion yourſelf. Why, what if I had not? ſaid I; I had been but the more ſuitable to you, and you muſt have liked me the better for that. He returned, No, Madam, juſt the contrary; for though I own I had not thought of religion myſelf, yet, had any woman told me ſo of herſelf, I ſhould preſently have ſaid, ſhe was no match for a gentleman; for no man can be ſo void of ſenſe, as well as of religion, as not to know, that a woman of no religion is no woman fit to make a wife of: and this, ſays he, convinced me, that you were in the right to refuſe me on that account.

Aunt It was a very ingenuous acknowledgment, I confeſs; the truth of it is ſo convincing, that I wiſh all the young women who have their ſettlements in view, would reflect ſeriouſly on this point, That, however wicked men are, they are always willing to have ſober, religious and virtuous wives; and 'tis very rarely, that the worſt rake in nature, if his ſenſes are in exerciſe, deſires to have a wife looſe like himſelf.—But pray go on, niece.

Yo. Si. He told me, he was not gone a quarter of

an hour from me, but this reflection ſtruck with horror upon his mind: What a dreadful creature am I? Sure I am a horrid frightful wretch! that a woman of ſobriety and religion was afraid to venture to take me, for fear of being ruined; and that ſhe ſhould think ſhe declared war againſt Heaven, and joined herſelf to one of God's enemies! He was going on, but I found his ſpeech ſtopped of a ſudden; at which I was a little ſurpriſed, and aſked him, if he was not well? he ſaid, Yes; and endeavoured to hide the little diſorder he was in, and went on. He then told me, that I had really been very juſt to him, and he had reaſon to thank me for it; and that he had deſired my ſiſter to expreſs his mind fully on that account; which he hoped ſhe had done. I told him, I could not now enter upon an apology for what I had ſaid to him ſo long ago; that if I had treated him rudely or ſeverely, I was very ſorry; but that what I did was occaſioned, as he knew very well, by his making ſuch open declarations, and ſuch as I thought he really had no occaſion for, concerning his averſion to, and ignorance of all religion; and that it was really a dreadful thing to think of marrying on ſuch terms. He replied, that if I had ſaid leſs than I did, he muſt neceſſarily, when he came to his ſenſes, have had a meaner opinion of me, than he had; and that it was really the reproaches that I had given him, and the excellent reaſons I had given him for my reſolutions of rejecting him, that had now brought him back to me, and had made him reſolve to have no woman on earth but me, if I would but revoke the reſolution I had taken againſt him: for nothing leſs than ſo much religion and virtue, could ever make him happy.

Aunt. If he was ſincere in this, I aſſure you, niece, it was a high compliment upon religion, as well as upon your conduct.

Yo. Si. I told him, that as the reaſon I had for uſing him ſo, was thus approved by himſelf, he bound me to preſerve the ſame reſolution, on the hazard of his having a leſs eſteem for me. He confeſſed that was very true, unleſs he could convince me the cauſe was removed; which he ſaw no hopes of; and that was the reaſon that he came to viſit me again, with ſo little encouragement, that he knew not what to think of it.

Eld. Si. What could he mean by that? why, ſure, then all we have heard muſt be falſe, and he is the ſame man as ever.

Yo. Si. I was greatly ſtartled at his words, and looked ſteadily at him, but could judge nothing from his countenance; but it grew late, and he took his leave, falling into ſome other curſory talk, and left me, I confeſs, in the greateſt confuſion of thoughts imaginable; for I was dreadfully afraid he would declare himſelf to have no ſenſe of religion on his mind ſtill; and then I was in a worſe condition than I was at firſt, having thus admitted a ſecond treaty with him.

Aunt. I thought, child, you was a little perplexed on Tueſday night; but I took it to be only a little thoughtfulneſs more than ordinary, which is uſual on ſuch occaſions.

Yo. Si. When he came again the next night, he made a kind of an apology for having left me in more diſorder than he uſed to do: for to tell you true, Madam, ſays he, I was not able to go on with what I was ſaying to you; neither am I now, ſays he, ſeeing I am come to wait on you, and yet have effectually ſhut the door againſt myſelf. I told him, I perhaps did not rightly underſtand him, unleſs he would explain himſelf: Why, ſays he, I have firſt told you ſincerely, how abſolutely I approve the reſolution you took againſt me, and yet owned and do

ſtill, that I am no way able to convince you that the cauſe is removed. I told him, that I thought he was not juſt to himſelf; and that the ſame thing, whatever it was, that had power to convince him that I was under a neceſſity to refuſe him on that occaſion, would certainly aſſiſt him to remove the cauſe. He turned ſhort upon me: But, Madam, ſaid he, did I not make conditions with you, that whenever I talked of it, you ſhould take me for a hypocrite? and did I not declare poſitively to you, that I would deceive you if I could?

Eld. Si. Now I know what he meant.

Yo. Si. Ay, ſo do I too; but he run it up ſo high againſt himſelf, that I could not anſwer a word, unleſs I would have turned the tables, as it were, againſt myſelf, and courted him, by telling him how well I was ſatisfied of his ſincerity; ſo that, in ſhort, I was quite puzzled: for what could I ſay to a man that did, as it were, bid me believe him to be a hypocrite?

Aunt. You had a nice caſe before you, niece; pray what ſaid you to it?

Yo. Si. I told him very coldly, I was under a neceſſity of believing every thing he ſaid, becauſe he had been ſo ſincere with me all along: and I begged him therefore not to tell me ſeriouſly now that he was a hypocrite, and that the cauſe of my refuſing to talk with him before was not removed; that I hoped it was otherwiſe, but ſhould deſpair of it, if it came from his own mouth; and that if I was aſſured from his own mouth, that he came to deceive me, he muſt needs know I had nothing elſe to do, but to act as I did before, which he had owned I had reaſon for. No, Madam, ſays he, I do not ſay that I deſire to deceive you; but I ſay, that having told you I would, you ought to believe I deſign it; and I ſee no room to convince you that I am not an hy-

pocrite, ſeeing I promiſed you I would be ſo; and I know not whether I dare tell you that I am not ſo, even in the beſt of me.

Eld. Si. I could have put an end to all this nicety in two words.

Yo. Si. Then you will the more eaſily tell me how I ſhall do it.

Eld. Si. Why, I would have told him, that tho' I had not ſo much concern for him to buſy myſelf to inquire after his conduct, yet I had not ſo little, as not to be glad to know, by other hands than his own, that he was no hypocrite; and that I rejoiced for his ſake to hear, that his eyes were opened to that which could alone make him the happieſt man alive.

Yo. Si. Then I muſt at the ſame time have told him, that my ſcruples were all over about him; which was as much as to tell him I would have him whenever he pleaſed to take me: but I han't learn'd that way of talking yet.

Aunt. Well, niece, and if you had, after ſo long acquaintance, and ſo much preſſing, I do not think you could have charged yourſelf with being forward.

Yo. Si. Well, then, you will the better like what has happened ſince, Madam.

Aunt. With all my heart; then pray go on, my dear.

Yo. Si. Why, Madam, this took up the firſt three or four nights of our diſcourſe; the night before laſt he began a little more ſeriouſly, and came cloſer to the thing itſelf; he told me, he had made himſelf very melancholy with me, the two laſt times he was with me; for he thought, that inſtead of courting me to have him, he had taken a great deal of pains to court me to refuſe him again. I told him, I thought ſo too; and that I confeſſed I had

been a little concerned about it, becauſe I could by no means underſtand him. He told me, it proceeded from the juſt reflection he made on his fooliſh diſcourſe two years ago, *viz.* that he wiſhed he had counterfeited religious diſcourſe, and that he would certainly have cheated me if he could, and did not doubt but he could have done it effectually. Thoſe words, he ſaid, flew in his face, when he went to ſay any thing ſeriouſly to me, and perſuaded him that I would believe he was only counterfeiting ſerious things on purpoſe to deceive me. I anſwered, he might reproach himſelf with thoſe things, but I did not lay any ſtreſs on them; for I believed he had too much honeſty, whether it proceeded from religion or no, to offer to deceive me in a thing, in which he owned ſo ingenuouſly I was right. Then he told me, with the greateſt affection in his diſcourſe that ever I ſaw in my life, that he muſt confeſs, as he ſaid before, that my rejecting him, as I had done, had made impreſſions on his mind quite different from what he had before; but that he found it the hardeſt thing in the world to expreſs what had happened to him on that account, and the thoughts of thoſe things which had taken up his mind ſince that; only this he would own to me, that I was in the right; that he had moſt notoriouſly expoſed himſelf to me; and that he had perfectly the ſame opinion now of thoſe things, which I had before, *viz.* that a religious life was the only heaven upon earth; but he could go no farther, he ſaid, nor could he anſwer for himſelf, how far ſuch thoughts might carry him, or expreſs to me the particulars that had lain upon his mind about them; and how far what he had ſaid would ſatisfy me, he did not know. I told him, I hoped he did not think I ſet up for a judge of the particulars; that my objection before lay againſt a general contempt

of all religion; that it was my terror to think of marrying an enemy to God, one that had no ſenſe of the common duties we all owe to him that made us: but that I never pretended to expect a confeſſion of faith from him, or any man in ſuch a caſe. He told me, he thought it required more aſſurance than he was maſter of, to talk any thing of himſelf that way, at leaſt till there were more intimacy between us; that he thought religious things (talked of in that manner) received an injury from the very diſcourſe; and that it was next door to boaſting of them, which was the worſt kind of hypocriſy: and if he could ſay no more of himſelf but this, he hoped I would take it for a ſufficient teſtimony of the alteration of his thoughts, *viz.* that he loved me for the honour I paid to religion, and for that ſteadineſs which had made me refuſe him before. I told him, I ſaw his difficulty, and that I would abate him the trouble of entering into particulars, which I found he was too modeſt to relate, and which, however, I was not quite a ſtranger to; and that I deſired we might ſpeak no more of a thing which I knew it was difficult for him to be free in. He bluſhed as red as fire, when I ſaid I was not a ſtranger to the particulars, which he declined to expreſs, and ſaid not one word for a good while. I told him, I knew it was a point that could not come eaſily from a man's own mouth; that I did not deſire it, and would make him eaſy ſo far as to tell him, I was fully ſatisfied he was no hypocrite, and hoped he would give himſelf no more trouble about it. He took me in his arms, and told me very affectionately, that I had ſaid that of him, that he would give all the world to be able to ſay of himſelf; that, however, he hoped to be beholden to me for more than that; and as I had given him the firſt view of the beauty of a religous life, he expected a great deal more from my

assistance and example, in pursuing the steps of it. I told him, that I begged of him we might avoid all religious compliments, for they were the oddest things in nature; that he quite mistook me; that it was not because I thought myself capable of guiding in religious matters, that I insisted on the necessity of not marrying a man void of religion, but from a due sense of just the contrary, *viz.* the want I should be in of being guided and assisted in religious things upon all occasions myself; that it would be a fatal mistake the other way, and greatly to my disadvantage, to have him expect more from me than he would find; and that, on the contrary, I thought I had now so much less religion than he, that he ought to refuse me now, for the same reason that I refused him before.

This is the sum of our affair, and thus it stands, only with this addition, that he told me a very pleasant story which happened at a chocolate-house near the court, which is so useful, as well as diverting, that I cannot but relate it to you.

[Here she tells them the story of the two beaus and the Lord, discoursing of the suitableness of a religious life, to the life of a gentleman.]

Aunt. That story is fit to be read for a lecture of instruction to all the young gentlemen of this age. Well, niece, you are a happy girl.

Yo. Si. Why, Madam?

Aunt. Only in being courted by a gentleman of the greatest sincerity, modesty, and piety, that I ever met with in my life.

Yo. Si. And would you advise me, Madam, to have him then?

Aunt. Ay, child, without any more difficulty, if you desire to be the happiest woman alive, and an example and encouragement to all the young women

in England, for the rejecting profane and irreligious husbands.

Thus far, I think, contains all the useful part of this story, only adding, that it was not long after this, both the agreement and settlement being all in readiness, the father and all friends assenting, they were married, and lived afterwards the happiest couple that can be imagined; having a sober, regular, well-governed family, a most pleasant, comfortable, agreeable conversation with one another; suitable in temper, desires, delights, and in a word, in every thing else; and, which made them compleatly happy, they were exemplary in piety and virtue to all that knew them.

RELI

RELIGIOUS COURTSHIP.

PART II.

WE have ſeen the happy conduct of the youngeſt of the three daughters of the gentleman, whoſe family this book began with, and the comfortable ſucceſs of it. The ſecond daughter, from the beginning, acted upon other principles, or rather, indeed, upon no principles at all; yet her hiſtory may, perhaps, be no leſs fruitful of inſtruction than the other, though ſomething more tragical, as to her own part of it.

She had declared to her ſiſter, as appears in the beginning of her ſtory, that ſhe would not trouble herſelf, when it came to her turn, what religion the gentleman was of, or whether he had any religion or no, if ſhe had but a good ſettlement; and now we ſhall ſee her be as good as her word.

Her father, whoſe character I have ſufficiently ſpoken to already, having had, for many years, a conſiderable trade in Italy, where he once lived, there came an Engliſh gentleman to viſit him, who had been formerly cotemporary with him, and long been his correſpondent or factor there, *viz.* at Leghorn; and who, being grown very rich, was come to England, reſolving to ſettle here. There were ſome accounts, it ſeems, depending between them, which they had appointed a day to ſettle and balance, in order to exchange releaſes; which being all finiſhed in the morning, the father of theſe ladies takes his factor into his coach, and carries him home

to dinner with him, where the old gentleman entertained him very handſomely, and where he had an opportunity to ſee the two maiden daughters; for the youngeſt, who had been married ſome time, was gone into Hampſhire to her country-ſeat with her huſband.

This Leghorn merchant no ſooner ſaw and converſed a little with the ladies, but he took a fancy to the youngeſt, and from that time reſolved to make her his wife. It was not long before he let them know his mind; and, having made very handſome propoſals to her father, he (the father) received him with a frankneſs ſuitable to their long intimacy and acquaintance, and told him, With all his heart, if his daughter and he could agree.

Before I bring them together, it is proper to the reliſh of the ſtory, to take a little notice of the characters of the two young perſons, of whoſe ſtory we ought to have a general idea, that we may not be left to gather it up ſlowly among the particulars.

The young lady was very ſober, virtuous to the niceſt degree, extremely well bred, and wonderfully good humoured. She was likewiſe a very lovely, beautiful perſon, the handſomeſt of the three ſiſters beyond all compariſon. As to religion, ſhe had a very good foundation of knowledge, and had done nothing to make it be ſuppoſed ſhe was not truly religious in practice; but ſhe was not altogether ſo grave and ſerious as her elder ſiſter, much leſs was ſhe ſo devout and ſtrict as her younger ſiſter that was married, as might be obſerved from what paſſed between them at firſt: her temper was ſprightly and gay; and, though ſhe governed herſelf ſo, that ſhe gave every one room to ſee, that ſhe was one that had a true ſenſe of religion at bottom, and a fund of good principles and good notions in her mind; yet ſhe was young and merry, and did not tie her-

ſelf up ſo ſeverely in ſuch things as her ſiſters had done; which, though it was no part of her happineſs in the affair before her, yet it rendered her very agreeable to her father; and particularly, it made the affair with this gentleman much eaſier to her father, and he had much leſs trouble with her, than he had with her two ſiſters.

The gentleman was, as I have obſerved, an Italian merchant, a very handſome, agreeable perſon, perfectly well-bred, having lived abroad and ſeen a great deal of the world. He was alſo a man of excellent parts and ſenſe, talked admirably well, almoſt to every thing that came in his way, ſpoke ſeveral languages, and, in ſhort, was not a complete-bred merchant only, but much of a gentleman; and to all this was to be added, that he was very ſober, grave, and oftentimes, as occaſion offered, his diſcourſe upon religious affairs diſcovered him to be very ſerious and religious. As to his eſtate, it was not very well only, but extraordinary; he was indeed a little too old, having lived abroad above twenty-two years, and was about ſo much above twenty, which was the age of the lady. However, as this was an advantage in many other ways, as in his judgment and experience in the world, the father made no ſcruple at all of it, nor did his daughter inquire much after it.

In a word, having been introduced to the young lady, ſhe muſt have been a woman of much more nicety and ſcruple than ſhe profeſſed herſelf to be, if ſhe had diſliked any thing in his perſon or circumſtances; and therefore having kept her company for ſome weeks, things began to draw towards a cloſe, when one evening, after the gentleman had been with her, and was gone away, her eldeſt ſiſter and ſhe happened to meet; and the following dialogue between them may farther explain the caſe.

DIALOGUE I.

Eld. Si. WELL, ſiſter, how do you go on? When are we to go and buy wedding-clothes?

Si. Nay, I don't know; even when you will, I think. I don't know what we ſtay for, not I.

Eld. Si. Prithee let's have done with it then. I want to call him brother; then I can talk freely to him.

Si. Why, you may call him brother now, can't you? You ſee he calls you ſiſter already, as naturally as if you were all of a breed.

Eld. Si. Ay, ſo did ſomebody elſe, you know; and yet made a two years piece of work of it afterward for all that.

[She means the gentleman that courted the third ſiſter.]

Si. Yes, yes, I remember it; but I'll aſſure you I am none of thoſe; I'll either make an end of it one way, or make an end of it another way, in leſs than ſo many months.

Eld. Si. Perhaps your objections are not ſo juſt as hers.

Si. I don't enter into her ſcruples, I aſſure you.

Eld. Si. I hope you have not her occaſion.

Si. I don't know what occaſion ſhe had, not I.

Eld. Si. Nay, hold, ſiſter; don't ſay ſo neither; without doubt her occaſion was very juſt; and you have the ſame obligation upon you; but I hope you have not the ſame occaſion.

Si. I know not what you mean by obligation; I have no obligation at all upon me, as I know of.

Eld. Si. Why do you ſay ſo, ſiſter? I mean the obligation which is upon us all from the charge my

mother gave us upon her death-bed, about marrying religious huſbands.

Si. I look upon what my mother ſaid to be good counſel, which we ſhould give its due weight to; but I do not take it to be a command that binds me abſolutely in duty to my mother's words. Duty certainly ends, when death ſeparates.

Eld. Si. I know not whether it does, or no, ſiſter.

Si. I think you are too ſuperſtitious that way, ſiſter.

Eld. Si. Well, but ſuppoſe it to be but as advice, yet it has a double force with it, *Firſt*, As it came from a tender, dear, and moſt affectionate mother, who not only moſt paſſionately loved us, but had an excellent judgment to direct her to give us the beſt counſel. And, *ſecondly*, As our own judgment and conſciences muſt teſtify with her, that what ſhe injoined us to obſerve, is the moſt reaſonable neceſſary thing for us to do, that can be imagined for our own advantage, and as well for our happineſs here as hereafter.

Si. You lay a greater ſtreſs upon it than I do, I confeſs. If my mother had been alive indeed, I ſhould have thought myſelf obliged to be guided by her directions, and her injunctions would have been poſitive commands: but then ſhe would have been able to judge of particular circumſtances, and would have given her advice accordingly.

Eld. Si. But her advice to us was therefore ſuited to her preſent ſtate of abſence, and went no farther than to a caſe deſcribed by its own circumſtances, and which nothing can alter; becauſe the obligation ſuppoſes the circumſtance, and where the circumſtance is not, the obligation ceaſes.

Si. You talk ſo learnedly, I want an explanation.

Eld. Si. No, ſiſter, you don't want an explanation, I am ſure; but you are diſpoſed to lay it all aſide, as a thing you have no need of; however, I'll

explain myſelf in a word ſpeaking. Our mother warned us againſt marrying men of no religion, that is, men that made no profeſſion of a reverence to God and his worſhip; this want of a religious profeſſion, is the circumſtance which I ſpeak of; if the circumſtance does not appear, the advice ceaſes; for our mother knew we could not judge of ſincerity.

Si. Well; ſo then if a man tells me he is religious, it is well enough, whether he ſpeaks truth or no.

Eld. Si. What need we talk of this? I hope you have an aſſurance of the contrary in Mr ——.

Si. No, not I indeed; what aſſurance can I have? He ſeems to be a ſober man, that's all I know of it.

Eld. Si. Well, and I would know more of it, however, if I were you.

Si. Why, I do know ſomething more of it too, now I think of it; for we were talking of ſuch things one night, when we happened to mention Sir Robert ——, and he ſpoke of him with a great deal of indignation; he ſaid he was a horrid atheiſtical wretch, and that he could not bear his company; for he was always making a jeſt of ſacred things, bantering all religion in ſuch a manner, that no ſober mind could abide it without horror.

Eld. i. Well, there is ſomething in that, I aſſure you.

Si. Why, I take it to be a plain declaration, that he has a juſt reverence for religion; as my ſiſter took the contrary in her lover, for a declaration of his having no religion at all.

Eld. Si. Nay, he told her he had not, in ſo many words, and that he had not troubled his head about it, and did not intend to do it.

Si. Well, then, and this gentleman has told me he has; for he owns he has ſo much regard for religion, that he cannot hear it ridiculed and bantered without horror.

Eld. Si. That is ſomething, I confeſs, in general: But——

Si. But what? What would you have me do? Muſt I examine his principles and opinions? Shall I aſk him to ſay his catechiſm? If I ſhould talk on that faſhion to him now, what kind of a catechetical wife will he think I ſhall make? He'll think I ſhall be a ſchoolmiſtreſs rather than a wife.

Eld. Si. No, no; tho' you are ſo pert with your ſiſter, forſooth, you need not be ſo with him, I hope; nor need I tell you how to manage ſuch a point. But I warrant you I would find it out, what his opinion was one way or another: why, he may be a Papiſt for aught you know yet of him; ſome of them are very religious in their way, and ſpeak very reverently and ſeriouſly of religion in general.

Si. Let him be a Papiſt and he will, I am ſure I can never aſk him ſuch a queſtion; but, however, I am pretty well ſatisfied as to that too; for I heard him ſay once, he had been at church: and another time accidentally ſpeaking about religion, he declared he was a member of the church of England as by law eſtabliſhed.

Eld. Si. Well, you are an eaſy lady; a little matter ſatisfies you. I ſhould preſently have ſaid, I hope, Sir, you mean the Proteſtant church of England. Why, do you not imagine the Roman Catholics think the Popiſh church is the only church of England that is eſtabliſhed by law?

Si. Sure, ſiſter, you take all the world to be hypocrites and cheats. I never can ſuſpect any gentleman that bears the character of an honeſt man, would ſet up to impoſe upon me with ſuch equivocal ſpeeches; why, I never heard ſuch a vile diſtinction in my life.

Eld. Si. Have you not? Why, then I have; I have heard that in King Charles II.'s time, people

in general were deluded with that very expreſſion in all their public ſpeeches, proclamations, declarations, *&c.* promiſing always to preſerve and maintain the church of England, as eſtabliſhed by law; and yet all that while they meant the Popiſh church.

Si. Theſe are remote things, ſiſter; for my part, I have no miſtruſt; I am honeſt myſelf, and I ſuſpect nobody.

Eld. Si. It is a thing of moment, ſiſter; I would be ſure.

Si. Not I; I have no room to ſuſpect.

Eld. Si. Then you do not anſwer the obligation you were under to my mother's deſire.

Si. Yes, I do; for I think I have good reaſon to believe him a very ſerious religious gentleman.

Eld. Si. But you know my mother engaged us to examine particulars, and not to marry any man, how religious ſoever he ſeemed alſo, unleſs he was of the ſame opinion in religion with ourſelves.

Si. In that I think my mother went too far, ſiſter.

Eld. Si. My mother gave us a great many examples of the miſery that has followed in the relation of huſband and wife, by reaſon only of differences in opinion.

Si. It muſt be then where there was but little religion on either ſide.

Eld. Si. I don't know that neither; you and I know ſome families, more than one or two, where they are all at daggers drawing about opinion, and the families are ruin'd as to their peace: and yet both are very religious too, nay zealous in their way; and the more the zeal, the more the ſtrife.

Si. There may be zeal, but there is no charity then; and what's any religion without charity?

Eld. Si. Well, but becauſe charity does not always keep pace with religion, and every one is apt to think themſelves in the right, and to reproach

the ſincerity of thoſe that differ from them; therefore our mother earneſtly preſſed us to make that point ſure, before we fixed our choice for our lives.

Si. It is a fine thing to talk of, but hard to be followed. What have I to do with his opinion? And what can I ſay to him, if he tells me he is of one opinion, and ſhould be of another? You, nor no young body alive, can prevent being impoſed upon, if a man finds it for his purpoſe to deceive us.

Eld. Si. Well, ſiſter, you trample upon all caution; you are one of them that ſeem perfectly indifferent whether you are deceived or no.

Si. No, ſiſter, I am not willing to be deceived, you ſee; I have had a general diſcovery of his being a man religiouſly inclin'd, that has a reverence for the worſhip of God, and the being of God; nay, you cannot but remember, how the other night at ſupper he diſcourſed very gravely, and, I aſſure you, to me it was very agreeable, about the men of the town firſt pretending to be Atheiſts, and to deny the being of a God, and the next minute profanely ſwearing by his name.

Eld. Si. All this is true, and clears you from the firſt ſcruple; ſo far, I may grant, you are within my mother's firſt injunction, Not to marry a man that does not profeſs to be religious in general; but that is but one part. What ſay you to the other, Not to marry any man, however profeſſing himſelf to be religious, that is not of the ſame opinion with yourſelf?

Si. You will carry every thing up to the extremity; but, however, I have a way for that too; and you ſhall not charge me with ſlighting my mother's advice.

Eld. Si. What way have you got? I doubt it is but an odd one.

Si. Why, if he will not be of my opinion, I'll be of his opinion; and ſo we will agree one way, if we can't t'other.

Eld. Si. That's boldly ſaid, and, I muſt own to you, ſignifies, you are yet to chuſe in your own opinion. Pray, what if he ſhould be a Roman Catholic, as I hinted before? you know, he has lived in Italy.

Si. Well, if he ſhould be a Chriſtian Catholic, I am a Catholic Chriſtian: ſo we need not fall out for all that.

Eld. Si. I perſuade myſelf, you are not ſo indifferent as you make yourſelf, or elſe (which I hope rather) you are jeſting with me, or you talk thus upon a ſuppoſition, that you are ſure he is a Proteſtant.

Si. Well, you are in the right there too; I cannot entertain ſuch thoughts of him; beſides, my father told me he was a Proteſtant.

Eld. Si. It is our misfortune, ſiſter, that my father does not much concern himſelf about thoſe things; he leaves us to our fate.

Si. And is that our misfortune, ſay you? I do not ſee it, I confeſs; for I think 'tis our buſineſs to chuſe for ourſelves: and I obſerve, where fathers are ſo very ſtraitlac'd, and confine their children to ſuch and ſuch particulars in the huſbands or wives they ſhall chuſe, their children generally chuſe without much regard to thoſe injunctions, or elſe fly directly in the face of them, and go quite contrary.

Eld. Si. You argue, ſiſter, from the practice to the duty, as if, becauſe children do not regard the care and concern of their parents in their marriages, therefore they ought not to do ſo; and that it was not the duty of parents to direct them, or to concern themſelves about it.

Si. I don't inquire what is the duty of parents; I am ſpeaking of what is the practice of children.

Eld. Si. But you do not juſtify that practice, I hope?

Si. I think, take one time with another, children

do as well, when they truſt to their own directions, I mean when they chuſe with judgment: pray, what would become of us, if we were juſt to follow our father's direction? you know, he would direct us to take the firſt that comes, if he liked but the ſettlement.

Eld. Si. That's a wrong way of arguing, ſiſter, that, becauſe our father neglects it, therefore children are not the better for ſuch parents as do their duty, and that ſhew a juſt concern for the religious happineſs of their children, in ſettling them in the world.

Si. I do not ſee much difference, I ſay; but ſometimes one do as well as the other.

Eld. Si. Yes, there is this difference, ſiſter, that, where the parents act right, the children are ſeldom ruin'd, unleſs it be by their own wilful obſtinacy.

Si. And ſometimes children are ruined, let the parents do their beſt; nay, ſometimes the parents themſelves know not what to direct.

Eld. Si. You may as well ſay, that, becauſe doctors die, nobody ſhould take phyſic.

Si. Every one has eyes to chuſe for themſelves; I don't think the proverb has any weight in this caſe, That love is blind: folks may eaſily ſee the difference between a religious man and an Atheiſt, without their parents.

Eld. Si. But it is a matter of ſuch weight, and ſo irrecoverable when done, that we ought to ſee with as many eyes as we can; and a careful, religious parent is a good ſcout to look out for us, a good pilot to ſteer us, and a good counſellor to adviſe us.

Si. I don't ſee the want of it, perhaps, ſo much as you do; I ſee, ſometimes, the very miſtake of the parent is the cauſe of the ruin of the children.

Eld. Si. I muſt confeſs, I do ſee the want of it, and I think it is a ſad thing to be left, ſo as we are, without the guide of our parents, for all that; and

if we, in particular, ſhould be ruined by it, our father would have ſmall ſatisfaction in his own conduct; 'tis ſuch management makes children ſlight their father's directions, as they do.

Si. Well, our father does kind things for us another way, however.

Eld. Si. I don't deſire to reflect upon my father; but, if his care was as much employed in chuſing religious huſbands for us (ſince he will have us marry) as it is in getting portions for us, we ſhould find the advantage of it much more to his future ſatisfaction, and our own.

Si. We muſt take the more care of it ourſelves.

Eld. Si. Why, that is the point I am upon: I wiſh you would do ſo then, ſiſter; for it is your caſe that I am upon.

Si I have done it, I think; I ſee no room to object.

Eld. Si. I can ſay no more, ſiſter; you are reſolved, I ſee, and muſt go on; but you will buy your experience at a terrible price; and if, upon the trial, you ſhould be miſtaken, you will think of this diſcourſe hereafter.

Si. What would you have me do?

Eld. Si. Do! I would enter into a ſerious diſcourſe of religious matters with him; I would know how we were to live together, whether as Heathens, or as Chriſtians; I would find out his principles, if he has any, or find out that he has none: this is not catechiſing him, nor is there any thing indecent in it. You are not aſhamed to inquire into his eſtate, and make proviſion for yourſelf out of it by a good jointure; and will you be aſhamed to inquire after that, which is of ten thouſand times the conſequence? ſure, you can never go on hoodwinked at all hazards thus in that part that is for the happineſs of your life, ſoul and body; beſides, had you not our ſiſter's example before you?

Si. Why, I tell you, it is clear to me, that he is a man that has a ſenſe of religion upon his mind; I gave you an inſtance of it in his deteſtation of Sir Robert and his practices: if my ſiſter could have had but ſo much ſatisfaction as that, ſhe would never have refus'd my brother ——.

Eld. Si. You wrong my ſiſter, I aſſure you; ſhe did not come ſo far indeed: becauſe ſhe came to a clear diſcovery that he had no religion at all, which was the firſt point; but I can aſſure you, if ſhe had got over that point, ſhe would have inquired farther; for 'tis a poor ſatisfaction that is founded upon negative religion only.

Si. If we expect to ſearch into poſitives, as the world goes now, I think we put a hardſhip upon ourſelves that we are not obliged to.

Eld. Si. But certainly it is our buſineſs to do it, if we expect to live happily; for there are a great many men now-a-days that are not Atheiſts, and that abhor bantering of religion, or making a jeſt of ſacred things; and yet have nothing at all in them that is fit to be called religion.

Si. Well, I am not to examine the inſide; a ſmall deal of hypocriſy will conceal the heart; if he be not a religious man, the worſt will be his own, I cannot find it out.

Eld. Si. Dear ſiſter, I ſhould not ſay ſo much, but that methinks you do not attempt to find it out; you do not inquire after it; I do not find you have exchang'd ſix words upon the ſubject.

Si. Why, I tell you, what he ſaid about Sir Robert —— gave me a good impreſſion of him.

Eld. Si. O ſiſter! you are ſoon ſatisfy'd; you would not be ſo eaſy in the matter of his eſtate; it ſeems you will truſt your ſoul upon lighter ſecurity than you will your portion.

Si. How do you mean?

Eld. Si. Why, ſiſter, you won't take it upon his word that he has an eſtate, or that you ſhall be provided for: but you muſt have his eſtate appear, your part be ſettled, and the land bound to you; it is not enough for him to ſay, I have ſuch and ſuch a revenue by the year, and you ſhall have ſuch a part of it if I die before you; but you will have it under hand and ſeal, ſo that he ſhall not be able to go back.

Si. Well, and ſhould I not do ſo?

Eld. Si. Yes, yes; but I allude only to it, and obſerve how leſs anxious you are, how much eaſier ſatisfied, how ſooner ſecure, about the main article that conſtitutes the happineſs of your life, and of your family, if ever you have one, than about your eſtate.

Si. You run this matter up to a ſtrange height, ſiſter, as if all my felicity conſiſted in this one queſtion, Whether my huſband be a religious man or no? nay, as if it conſiſted in his being of the ſame opinion in religion as I am of: as if I could not be religious, tho' my huſband was not ſo; or, in a word, as if I could not go to heaven without my huſband.

Eld Si. No, ſiſter; it is you that run it too high: I do not ſay you cannot go to heaven without your huſband; or you cannot be religious without your huſband; but I do ſay you cannot go comfortably through the journey thither without him, or he without you. A woman is to be a help meet, and a man is to be the ſame; now, a huſband will be a ſorry help to a wife, if he is not a help in the regious part of her life; and a ſorry help indeed in the religious part, if he has no ſenſe of it himſelf.

Si. But I tell you he has a ſenſe of it, and an affection to it.

Eld. Si. Well, but it will hold in the other part

of the queſtion too: ſuppoſe he has, yet if his ſenſe of religion is not the ſame with, or agreeable to your ſenſe of it; if he thinks you are going the wrong way, and you think he is going the wrong way, one pulls this way, and the other pulls that way, in religion; what will this come to in the family, ſiſter? have you conſider'd that?

Si. Yes, yes, I have conſidered it very well.

Eld. Si. I doubt it, ſiſter; I doubt you have only conſidered of it ſo as to reſolve not to conſider of it.

Si. I have conſidered it ſo far, as to ſee that I can do nothing in it any farther; I cannot enter into a debate about principles; tell him what my opinion is, and aſk him what his opinion is, and try beforehand whether they agree or no: I tell you, I don't think 'tis my buſineſs, any more than the talking to him of our ſettlement; that's the father's part to do; ſure my father won't bring a Heathen to me!

Eld. Si. It is true, and that is our miſery, that, as I ſaid before, we have not a father to concern himſelf in that part for us; but I do not think it is ſuch an improper thing for you to do. Sure I could ſome way or other bring it in, that I would make ſome gueſs at him: why, you have never offer'd at it in the leaſt; neither has he ſhewn you any thing of it; I do not ſo much as find that he has ever gone to church with us, ſince he appear'd here ſo publicly.

Si. Why, no, that's true; and I wonder'd he did not indeed, eſpecially laſt Sunday, when he din'd with us; but he made an excuſe that I thought was ſufficient.

Eld. Si. Well, and would not I have laugh'd at him at night, and aſk'd him, if ever he us'd to go to church? or whether he went to church that Sunday, or no?

Si. Why, ſo I did; and he told me he was obli-

ged to go that day to wait upon the Marquis de Montelon, the Spaniſh ambaſſador.

Eld. Si. The Spaniſh ambaſſador! why, then he was obliged to go to the popiſh chapel with him too; for the ambaſſador never fails at that time of day. I'll lay an hundred pounds he went to maſs with him: there's a clue for you, find out that now, and your buſineſs is done.

Si. Dear ſiſter, you are ſtrangely poſſeſs'd with Mr ——'s being a Papiſt; have you any particular notion of it? you perfectly fright me about it?

Eld Si. No, indeed, I muſt confeſs I have not the leaſt ground for it; I won't do him ſo much injuſtice: but if I were in your caſe, I would be ſatisfy'd about it; I would aſk him downright in ſo many words.

Si. I would not aſk him ſuch a queſtion for an hundred pounds.

Eld. Si. And I would not marry him without aſking him, for ten thouſand.

Si. Why, if I ſhould, and he were really a Papiſt, do you think he would be ſuch a fool as to tell me?

Eld. Si. Perhaps, he may be ſo honeſt as not to deny what he is not aſham'd of.

Si. I ſhould hate him the moment he confeſs'd it, not for being a Papiſt, but for ſhewing he had ſo little concern for me, as to venture to own it.

Eld. Si. So that you think he ought rather to deny his religion, and diſown his principles, than venture your diſpleaſure.

Si. I ſhould think he was very indifferent whether I was diſpleaſed or no, or that he preſumed upon my being ſo engaged to him, that I could not go off; either of which I ſhould take for an unſufferable inſolence.

Eld. Si. So you would have him conceal his principles, and diſcover them when you could not help yourſelf; pray which would be the greater inſult?

Si. You ſtrive to puſh me into a ſtrait, but I have a medium again that delivers me from the neceſſity on either ſide, and that is, to ſhake off the ſuſpicion; and ſeeing you have no real ground for it, I cannot ſee why I ſhould terrify myſelf with a mere jealouſy.

Eld. Si. I own I have no ground to ſuppoſe him a Papiſt; but I would never marry any man in the world without knowing what his principles are; 'tis no ſatisfaction to me, to ſay he's not an Atheiſt, he is not a profane deſpiſer of religion: negatives are a poor foundation, ſiſter, to go upon in a caſe of ſuch conſequence; if he is of any religion, he ſhould tell it me, or I would have nothing to ſay to him.

Si. Why, I told you, he ſaid in particular, that he was of the church of England as by law eſtabliſh'd.

Eld. Si. Why, firſt, dear ſiſter, I told you that's nothing but what any Papiſt may ſay, even without a diſpenſation; but however it ſeems he did not that, but in way of diſcourſe to other people; he did not ſay ſo ſeriouſly, in anſwer to any inquiry of yours, or to give you ſatisfaction.

Si. No, that's true; I have not deſired any ſatisfaction of him; for I take thoſe caſual occaſional diſcoveries of himſelf to have more of nature in them, and to be leſs liable to ſuſpicion, than a formal ſtudied anſwer to a jealous or doubting queſtion; and I have many reaſons for my opinion too.

Eld. Si. Why, that may be true; but I cannot think that ſuch occaſional curſory ſpeeches can have ſolid foundation enough to ſatisfy you in a thing of ſuch moment; and I think I have the teſtimony of the fathers of our reformation on my ſide, who, without doubt, ſaw in it the great weight that lies on this part, *viz.* of the advantage and neceſſity that there is, that huſband and wife ſhould be of the ſame

opinion in religion one with another; when they appointed, with the office of matrimony, that the communion be given to the marry'd couple at every wedding; that it might appear, not only that they both made a profeſſion of the Chriſtian religion, but that they both agreed in the profeſſion of the ſame principles, and join'd together in the ſame communion with the reform'd Proteſtant churches, and with one another. And I think this is enough to convince you of the juſtice of our mother's injunctions, that we ſhould not marry any man, how religious ſoever he was, unleſs he was of the ſame opinion in religion with ourſelves: or, as I obſerved above, that, as was the cuſtom, the man and wife might communicate together.

Si. I take that to be done principally to prevent Proteſtants marrying with Papiſts, and to diſcover the fraud, if there was any; you ſee that practice is left off now.

Eld. Si. I know it is left off, ſince other and leſſer differences among proteſtants have made mutual communion more difficult; but I think the reaſon of the thing remains, *viz.* that every couple ſhould know what communion they are of, and ſhould be always, if poſſible, ſincere and without conſtraint, of the ſame communion with one another.

Si. I rather think it is left off, becauſe it is not thought to be of ſo much moment as they thought it of then.

Eld. Si. That is then becauſe religion itſelf is leſs in faſhion than it us'd to be, which indeed is too true; alſo marriages are now wholly taken up with mirth and gay things: but in thoſe days matrimony ſeems to have been underſtood, as it really is in itſelf, a ſolemn and ſerious thing; not to be ventur'd on raſhly, conſider'd of ſlightly, or perform'd with levity and looſeneſs: 'tis a tranſaction of the great-

eſt weight, attended with circumſtances of the greateſt importance, and conſequences of the utmoſt concern to our welfare or miſery: the happineſs of life, the proſperity of families, and indeed the intereſt of the ſoul, is exceedingly dependent upon the good or bad conduct of both parties in this great affair; and to run headlong upon it, is rightly compar'd to a horſe ruſhing into the battle, and argues a miſerable thoughtleſſneſs of what is before us.

Si. Dear ſiſter, you terrify me with talking thus: what is it you would have me do?

Eld. Si. I would have you take ſome meaſures, ſuch as opportunity will not fail (in your converſation with this gentleman) to preſent you with, that you may know not only negatively, that he is no hater and deſpiſer of God and religion, but poſitively, what his principles in religion are: you may go as far farther as you ſee room for it, but leſs than this you can never be ſatisfied with; and can never anſwer it to God, to yourſelf, to your mother's dying injunctions, nor to your children, if you ſhould have any, to venture upon marrying him without it.

Si. If Mr —— heard your diſcourſe, he would think you were very much his enemy.

Eld. Si. If he was in his ſenſes, he would think me very much his friend.

Si. No, no, quite the contrary, I aſſure you.

Eld. Si. Pray, my dear, let me aſk you one queſtion; for I muſt own to you this is one of my great ſuſpicions; Has he inquired nothing after your religion, the profeſſion you make, or the opinion you are of? has he aſk'd you no queſtion about it neither?

Si. No, not a word, he knows better; he knows I ſhould give him but a ſhort anſwer, if he ſhould aſk me any thing about my religion: what, do you think I'll be catechis'd already? no, no; it is not come to that neither.

Eld. Si. This is one of the ſtrongeſt grounds of ſuſpicion to me, and aſſures me that he has very little regard to religion in general, that he can pretend to marry you, and know nothing whether you are a Heathen or a Chriſtian; an Atheiſt or a religious perſon, a Papiſt or a Proteſtant; the man can have no great value for religion, that is ſo little concerned whether his wife have any, or no; for I take the thing to weigh as much on one ſide as on the other, where there is any ſerious conſideration at bottom.

Si. Indeed we have had no diſcourſe about it.

Eld. Si. It ſeems you are pretty well agreed; that is to ſay, that neither of you trouble your heads about it. I muſt confeſs, I think it will be a dreadful match.

Si. Why ſo? I tell you I have a way to prevent all the miſchief you fear, and that is, as I told you before, I am reſolved we will agree; for if he is not of my opinion, I will be of his opinion, and ſo we will never have any ſtrife.

Eld Si. But ſuppoſe you cannot do this; for I take all that for looſe talk: for example, ſuppoſe he ſhould be a Papiſt?

Si. I won't ſo much as ſuppoſe ſuch a thing: I wonder you can ſuggeſt it of him.

Eld. Si. You ſeem to be very much in the faſhion of our city ladies, ſiſter; I am ſorry for it.

Si. What faſhion's that, ſiſter?

Eld. Si. Why, of reſerving their choice of principles, till they ſee what principles their huſbands ſhall be of.

Si. And is it not a very obliging cuſtom, ſiſter, in the young ladies? I think the gentlemen owe them a great deal for ſo much complaiſance.

Eld. Si. There ſeems to be ſomething of forecaſt in it, I confeſs, *viz.* that they may be in a poſture

to take any thing that offers; but there is nothing of ſerious religion in it.

Si. Well, there is a great deal of good humour in it; and it takes off the occaſions of religious diſputes afterwards, which I take to be the worſt kind of family-breaches.

Eld. Si. But is not a concurrence of principles beforehand a much better way, eſpecially conſidering that the inquiry is made during a ſtate of diſtance, and while there is a power of preventing the miſchiefs of being unequally yoked?

Si. Well, I am perſuaded there never was ſuch a thing done, except by my ſtiff formal ſiſter: did ever a young gentleman when he came to court his miſtreſs, examine her, to know her principles, and aſk her what religion ſhe was of? or did ever a young lady, when ſhe was courted by any gentleman, ſet up to catechiſe him upon the articles of his creed, except, as I ſay, my ſurly ſiſter?

Eld. Si. Let me anſwer that queſtion with a queſtion, ſiſter; Did ever a young lady, that had any regard to religion, and the future happineſs of her life, ſuffer herſelf to be courted two months by a ſtrange perſon coming out of Italy, from the very bowels of ſuperſtition, and the very kingdom of Popery, and go on with him even to drawing of writings, and never know what religion he was of, or whether he had any religion, or no, except that ſhe had heard by accident that he was not an Atheiſt?

Si. Well, I muſt take him for better and for worſe, you know; I'll make the beſt of him I can.

Eld. Si. I am very ſorry that I can't prevail with you to prevent your own misfortunes, when it is ſo eaſy to be done.

Si. You propoſe what I cannot ſo much as mention to him; I tell you it would be the rudeſt thing;

I'm ſure if he ſhould do ſo to me, I ſhould ſpit in his face, and bid him go and look for one that was religious enough for him; ſure, never any ſuch thing was done in the world!

Eld. Si. I wonder you can talk ſo, ſiſter! do you not remember the paſſages about Mr—— when he courted my couſin ——? did he not enter into a moſt ſerious pretty diſcourſe with her about religion, when we were all at table with them? and don't you remember, we all ſaid, ay, and you too, ſiſter, when you heard it, that he did it with ſo much modeſty, and ſo handſomely, that nothing could be more becoming? and did not you, as well as I, call her a thouſand fools for pretending to be diſguſted at it?

Si. But ſhe took ill his public manner of doing it, which I think was wrong too.

Eld. Si. But I find you don't know or don't remember the reſt of the ſtory; ſhe expoſed herſelf to the laſt degree by reſenting it. The caſe was this: the gentleman had courted her ſome weeks, and lik'd her, nay lov'd her very well; but was greatly perplexed to find out what taſte of religion his miſtreſs had; he was loath to fall point-blank upon her with the queſtion, juſt as you ſay in your caſe, yet he was not willing to be ſatisfied with a ſecond-hand relation neither; but one day when we were all together at my couſin's, the young gentleman ſupped there, and after ſupper her mother and he and I entering into a diſcourſe together of ſeveral matters, at laſt we began to talk of religion, and particularly of religious matches, when we were agreeably ſurpriſed to hear him talk for near half an hour wholly upon that ſubject. You were not there juſt when he talked of it, but we all gave you an account of it.

Si. I was not there; I ſupped at London that night, and came to you the next day, I ſuppoſe.

Eld. Si. You did ſo; but it would have pleaſed you to have heard him talk. He began with the meaning and nature of religion, how it conſiſted chiefly in natural duties, the effects of the knowledge and acknowledgment of a God governing the world, to whom we owed the homage of our lives, and of all we enjoyed, and muſt account for the uſe or abuſe of them: then he obſerved how pleaſant and agreeable a religious life was, how it was religion alone that made life happy, families pleaſant, ſociety agreeable, and relations comfortable; how miſerably ſome families were brought up for want of it; how beautiful it was to ſee an unity between relations in matters of that nature, and how dreadful the ſtrife was in families where it was otherwiſe.

Si. Where was ſhe all the while?

Eld. Si. She ſat juſt by him, and he held her by the hand all the while: he went on then to tell us a great many pleaſant ſtories of families that he had known: how in ſome the huſband was religious, and the wife atheiſtic and profane; and in others, the wife was religious, and the huſband rakiſh, looſe, and profligate; and how miſerable the one made the life of the other. Then he gave himſelf a looſe to talk of the conſtant, never-failing felicity of families where there was a harmony in religious things between huſband and wife; and then, to try her, I ſuppoſe, or perhaps to prevent her thinking he pointed his diſcourſe at her, he turn'd to her, and ſmiling, My dear, ſays he, if there be any defect on that account between you and I, it will be on my ſide; but I hope to be helped forward by you.

Si. That was a kind of a wheedle, rather than a ſerious turn in his talk: and I ſuppoſe ſhe took it ſo.

Eld. Si. No, no, ſhe took it otherwiſe, I aſſure you; for he might eaſily ſee ſhe was not pleaſed. However, he went on, and told us a long ſtory

of a couple that were married, and were both very religious, and yet, ſaid he, they never had any happineſs, any agreement, or any practical religion in the family; this put me upon inquiry into the circumſtances of it: Why, Madam, ſays he, one was of one opinion in religion, and one was of another. Both of them were tenacious of their own opinion, and cenſorious of the other. One went to one place to worſhip, and one to another: One prayed to God in one part of the houſe, and one in another. Why, ſays I, they prayed to the ſame God, I hope; ſure charity might have taught them to have prayed together! So far from that, Madam, ſays he, that they not only never prayed with one another, but I believe they ſcarce ever prayed for one another in their lives, but looked upon one another as Heathens and Publicans, and ſuch as God himſelf would not hear.

This was a ſad family, Sir, ſaid I; but I hope there are very few ſuch in this nation, where religion is ſo heartily eſpouſed. Truly, Madam, ſays he, it may teach us what occaſion there is for us to ſeek out for religious wives, and to take care to be agreeable huſbands to them, when we have them. And here he ſaid a great many handſome things indeed of the little concern men generally took upon themſelves, either to marry religious wives, or to ſee that the opinions of thoſe they married were not too much ſhocking with their own; and eſpecially that when men had religious wives, or women had religious huſbands, they did not ſtudy, as much as lay in them, on both ſides, to bring their opinions to agree with one another, bearing with one another, yielding as much as poſſible to one another, and the like; that, as the ſcripture ſaid, their prayers might not be hindered.

Si. Well, and was this the diſcourſe that ſhe did not like?

Eld. Si. I am ſure her mother and I liked it; but ſhe behaved herſelf ſo ſimply about it the next day, that gave him a ſurfeit of her religion, and he declined her afterwards upon that very account; for, as he told me ſince very ſeriouſly, ſhe diſcovered ſuch a temper at that time, ſuch a general diſlike of a religious life, and of a regular family, that made him particularly afraid of her.

Si. Ay, ay, he ſhould have gone, if he was ſo nice. I ſhould have liked his diſcourſe no better than ſhe did.

Eld. Si. How can you ſay ſo, ſiſter, when you cannot but remember how you did like it when you heard of it?

Si. I ſhould have thought it was too public tho', and that it was a kind of forcing me to a neceſſity of giving an account of my opinions, whether I would or no.

Eld. Si. Well, what you would have done, I know not; but I think no woman in her ſenſes could have diſliked ſuch a principle as he went upon; it plainly ſhewed her, that he was a man that placed the principal felicity of his life upon having a religious wife, a religious converſation in his family, and a religious government of it as it increaſed.

Si. What was that to the purpoſe! She would have had him without it, and he might have talked of it afterwards.

Eld. Si. Yes, yes, ſhe would have had him without it, that was her folly: but he was reſolved he would not have her without it, and that was his wiſdom; and there was an abſolute neceſſity for him to try beforehand what he had to expect.

Si. Well, I would not have been tried by him; he ſhould e'en have gone, I ſay, and taken a fool for his own finiſhing, where he could have found her.

Eld. Si. Well, and he did go; and you know he

married afterwards a very ſenſible, ſober, and religious woman, and they are a very happy family as any I know; whereas our fooliſh couſin, you ſee, has married a rake; a fellow of no religion; and is as miſerable almoſt as is poſſible for a woman that has a good eſtate to be made in this world.

Si. Well, ſiſter, and how do you bring this ſtory down to my caſe? I hope, I am not going to marry a rake, as ſhe has done; if I thought it was ſo, I would ſoon clear myſelf.

Eld. Si. No, no, ſiſter, I do not ſay ſo; but there are many kinds of huſbands to make a ſober woman miſerable, beſides rakes, that I aſſure you; nor was it upon that account that I told you the ſtory.

Si. What, about differing in opinions, you mean? I muſt confeſs, I think, ſiſter, you are too nice in that caſe, and run it up, I ſay, too high. I can give many inſtances where ſuch matches do very well.

Eld. Si. Pretty well, you ſhould have ſaid; and I know where you are a-going to name a family. I ſuppoſe you mean our couſin Martha ——, and our friend James ——; one a ſtrict church-woman, and the other a Quaker.

Si. Well, ſuppoſe I did mean thoſe; they live very comfortably, and love one another very well.

Eld. Si. I am glad you have named them, becauſe I would argue from the beſt example you can give. I allow they live as well as it is poſſible for two of ſo wide and irreconcileable principles to do, and it is owing to a world of good humour, affection, and charity in both of them; but if you think there is not ſomething wanting between them, which ought to be between a man and his wife, ſomething eſſential to what we call happineſs, ſomething they would give half their eſtate to have, and the want of which robs them of the ſweeteſt part of relation,

and of the beſt and moſt ſolid comfort of a married life; or if you think that they are not both ſenſible of it, you are greatly miſtaken.

Si. I do not converſe much with them, not I; but I know they are a very loving couple, and every body takes notice of it, and admires them for it.

Eld. Si. Before I go on where I was ſpeaking, let me take notice to you, that your very laſt words now are an argument on my ſide. It is true, they are admired for their kind and pleaſant way of living one with another; and why is it? but becauſe it is ſo ſeldom, ſo rare, ſo wonderful indeed, to find two of different opinions agree ſo well, that all people wonder at theſe two: And ſhall any young woman, that values her peace, and lays any ſtreſs upon the happineſs of an agreement with her huſband, venture upon ſuch a circumſtance, in which it muſt needs be next to a miracle, if ſhe has any ſuch happineſs?

Si. You do not know but there may be many more ſuch.

Eld. Si. Well, but I'll keep to your own example, and I will convince you, ſiſter, that, even in theſe two, who are happy to a miracle, yet there is an exception to their felicity; and, though they love entirely, and that love covers a multitude of things, yet, I ſay, they find ſomething wanting, which other people have, and ſomething that they would be glad to have: and I have had frequent occaſions, in ſerious diſcourſe with her, to hear her ſpeak her mind freely to me, in this very caſe; particularly, I will give you one example of it, *viz.* One Sunday morning when I went to church with her, O! ſaid ſhe to me, couſin, if I could but get this dear Jemmy of mine to go to church with me! Well, ſays I, what then? What then! ſays ſhe; why, then I ſhould be the happieſt woman upon

earth: Methinks, it is the melancholieſt thing, continued ſhe, to go alone to the worſhip of God, and the man that I love, and is to me as my own ſoul, won't worſhip with me; it breaks my heart; it quite takes away all the comfort of my life. A while after this, as we walked along the ſtreet to go to church, ſhe fetched a deep ſigh: What's the matter with you, ſaid I, couſin? The matter, couſin! ſays ſhe, look there, you'll ſee what's the matter: There's Mrs ——, with her huſband and all her children, going hand in hand to ſerve God together: they live a heavenly life; while we, though we love one another better than they do a great deal, yet live like two ſtrangers on the Sabbath-day, whatever we do all the reſt of the week. Now, what think you of all their apparent affection to one another, ſiſter? Will that make up the loſs?

Si. They live very comfortably, for all that; and their love makes up all thoſe intervals in their ſatisfaction.

Eld. Si. Well, I'll tell you how comfortably they live; I aſſure you, though they are patterns to the whole world, for extraordinary affection, and their love is ſo uninterrupted, that it does make up abundance of other things; yet here, I ſay, it makes up no intervals, I can aſſure you of it; nay I think verily, that affection, which is confeſs'd they have one for another, and for which they are both ſo admired, makes it the worſe; at leaſt, it makes it the more grievous to bear; and the part I am telling you will prove it; pray let me go on with it: I came back with her and dined; and after dinner, honeſt James takes up his gloves and his cane, and came and kiſſed her, and prepares to go to the Quakers meeting. She could hold no longer then, but burſt out into tears; he was extremely anxious to know what ailed her, but ſhe could not ſpeak; ſhe was unwilling to

grieve him, and unwilling to ſay any thing that was unkind; he preſſed her a long time, and ſaid a thouſand tender kind things, that I hardly expected from him; but that made her cry the more. At laſt, I ſaid to him ſmiling, I know what troubles her, but you won't relieve her. Won't I! ſays he a little moved; why doſt thou ſay ſo? I would let out my blood to do her any good; and ſhe knows, I would ſtick at nothing to do for her. Why, ſays I, you won't ſerve God with her. Won't I! ſays he, yes, I would with all my heart, if ſhe would let me. This I found laid a foundation for ſome diſpute about their principles; but ſhe wiſely avoided that, and I perceived it, ſo I put it off. I dare ſay, ſaid I, ſhe would give all ſhe had in the world, you would but go to church with her now. At that ſhe burſt out, though full of tears. Ay, ſays ſhe, I would give him back my jointure with all my heart. He took her in his arms, and, with all the tendereſt and kindeſt expreſſions that he was capable of, endeavoured to pacify her, and put an end to it, as a thing they could not diſpute of without unkindneſs, and therefore better to be avoided: but it took up the whole afternoon to reſtore them to one another, and ſhe neither went to the church, nor he to the meeting; and yet here was nothing but kindneſs and affection between them all this while.

Si. I never heard any thing of this before.

Eld. Si: But I have heard a great deal more from her, and from him too; though ſhe loves him to an extremity, and to give him his due, he merits all her affection; yet as ſhe is a very ſober religious woman, ſhe is ready to break her heart to think ſometimes what a life ſhe lives; ſhe can ſcarce ever talk to me of any thing elſe, I having been ſomething more intimate with her on thoſe occaſions than ordinary.

Si. What has ſhe to complain of? Has ſhe not a kind huſband? And does he not give her all the liberty and freedom in the world? Does ſhe not go as fine, and dreſs as well as ſhe pleaſes? Does he not keep her a coach, and give her leave to give her own liveries, and go where and do what ſhe will? Does ſhe not live like a queen? What can ſhe complain of?

Eld. Si. Her caſe, in a word, ſiſter, is the very caſe our dear mother warned us of; and it is not hard to tell you what ſhe has to complain of; ſhe is a very ſober religious woman, that ſerves God night and day, with a ſincerity and devotion not eaſy to be found among women, as the world goes now; and I'll tell you what grieves her, and what ſhe complains of. Her huſband is as religious too in his way as ſhe is in hers; but as there is no harmony or concurrence in their ſeveral principles and ways of worſhip, ſo there can be no public ſtated family-worſhip. He does not join with her, nor ſhe cannot join with him; ſo all the thing called *Family-religion*, the glory of a married ſtate, and the comfort of family-ſociety, is intirely loſt: the ſervants are left ungoverned, the children unguided; and there again is her grief doubled, ſhe has four little young children. It is true, he is a man of too good a humour to deny or reſtrain her in the education of her children; but it is a ſad thing to her to be obliged to inſtruct and caution her children againſt the practice of their father, whoſe life ought to be their pattern, and his practice their example. O ſiſter! if ever you come to look into ſuch a condition, with a feeling ſenſe of it as your own, you will find it is not all the tenderneſs of the moſt affectionate huſband in the world can make up the loſs of theſe things. On the other hand, he has his diſſatisfactions too; he is as ſad on the account of her diffe-

rence from him, as she is for his difference from her; so that, in short, the unhappiness is mutual.

Si. They should have considered and prevented these things beforehand.

Eld. Si. That's true, sister; and that's the reason of all my discourse to you; that's my proposal to you, and the reason why I press you so much to come to a certainty in these things. You will have sad reflections hereafter when it is past remedy.

Si. I am not so nice in the point; I told you my remedy for it; if he can't come up to me, I can come up to him. I am sure he is no Quaker.

Eld. Si. I hear you, sister; you make light of it now. I believe he is no Quaker, but he may be worse; and you are not sure he will equal that Quaker in goodness of humour, kindness, and affection, the want of which, I must tell you, will make the want of the other be so much the worse to bear.

Si. Well, I must run the venture of it, I think; it is gone too far to break off now.

Eld. Si. I have not been persuading you to break it off, sister; you mistake me; I am only arguing, or rather persuading you to inform yourself of things, and know beforehand what you are going to do, that you may not run into misery blindfold, and make your marriage be, as old Hobbes said of his death, A leap in the dark.

Si. I think all marriage is a leap in the dark, in one respect or other.

Eld. Si. Well, sister, if it be so, it should not be o in matters of religion, in whatever other case it s so; that should be clear, whatever is doubtful; that should be examined into, and perfectly discovered, whatever is omitted; the mistakes in this are fatal to both sides, and often irretrievable, and the consequences dismal.

Si. It is all a hazard, and that amongſt the reſt.

Eld. Si. No, no, ſiſter; I am firm in my opinion; you and I have often argued it, when you ſeemed to be of my mind. It is true, there is a hazard in every part of the change of life; we riſk our peace, our affection, our liberty, our fortunes; but we ought never to riſk our religion.

Si. Why, I am not running the riſk of my own religion, though I do not know his.

Eld. Si. Yes, truly in ſome meaſure, ſiſter, you do, and your own words acknowledged it juſt now: Did not you ſay, that if he would not be of your opinion, you would be of his? And is it not often that we ſee young women change their opinions, nay, change the very principles of their religion, in compliance with their huſbands?

Si. Well, and is it not very well to do ſo?

Eld. Si. If their principles were ill founded before, they do well to change them, to be ſure; but is it not oftener that they rather abandon principle than exchange it; loſe their religion than increaſe it? for you cannot ſuggeſt, that all the women who have changed their opinions, in compliance with their huſbands, were wrong before, and have changed for the better.

Si. It is better ſo far, that it takes away the foundation of family-breaches, which you ſpeak of.

Eld. Si. But it is a ſad exchange, if it be wrong; for the woman then exchanges the peace of her conſcience for peace with her huſband; loſes her religion, and gives up her principles, inſtead of exchanging them for better.

Si. There may be ſome compliance ſure, without entirely abandoning principles; you propoſe no medium between right and wrong.

Eld. Si. Why, take our couſin we were ſpeaking of, or her huſband the Quaker, let them ſtand for

the example: ſuppoſe ſhe, in compliance with him, for you know ſhe has affection enough to do any poſſible thing to oblige him, ſhould turn Quaker, would ſhe not retain a ſting in her ſoul, that would deſtroy all her inward peace?

Si. I don't know what to ſay to that; Quakers are Chriſtians, I hope?

Eld. Si. I won't enter into that; I'll allow them to be Chriſtians too; but take it of him as well as of her; ſuppoſe him to change then, and come over to her, then it would be the ſame in him: which is all one to the caſe in hand. Pray where is the felicity of ſuch a match, where one or other is ſuppoſed to act without conſcience, or againſt conſcience, all their days, for conjugal peace, and to ſacrifice principle to affection? Are not theſe ſtill invincible arguments for what I am perſuading to?

Si. I ſcarce know what you are perſuading to, not I.

Eld. Si. Yes, you do, ſiſter, very well; however, I'll repeat it as often as you ſay ſo: I am urging the abſolute neceſſity of young people comparing their religious principles and opinions before marriage; and ſeeing that they agree, at leaſt ſo far as to lay no foundation of a religious breach in the family after marriage; that they may worſhip God together, join in family-precepts, and ſupport family religion; that they may agree in their inſtructions to their children, and join in ſetting them examples; that there may be no diſputings or dividings againſt one another, but a mutual harmony in the propagating their eternal intereſt, and that they may go hand in hand the true way to heaven.

Si. And cannot this happen to them without a ſettlement of circumſtances before hand, that we muſt capitulate about religion as we do about jointures, and ſettle principles as we do fortunes always beforehand?

Eld. Si. That it may not or cannot happen ſo, I will not ſay; but if you will take the world, at large, as it is now ſtated, between thoſe that have no religion at all, and thoſe who differ from others, you muſt allow, ſiſter, it is a lottery of a thouſand blanks to one prize; and who, that value their own peace, would venture the odds?

Si. I believe I ſhall venture, for all that.

Eld. Si. Then either you have no principle now, ſiſter, or 'tis ten to one but you give it up when you are married.

Si. Perhaps you may be miſtaken in both.

Eld. Si. If I am, there is a third, which I was going to add, but reſtrained it in reſpect to you, in which I believe I ſhall not be miſtaken.

Si. Let us have it, however.

Eld. Si. If you will have it then, it is this; that (to repeat the former) either, as I ſaid, you have no principle now, or you will give up your principles when you are married, or will be very miſerable in a continual family-ſtrife to maintain them.

Si. It muſt all be ventured, ſiſter; I ſee no remedy now; there's no going back at this time of day.

[After this diſcourſe, the eldeſt ſiſter, ſeeing her reſolute, gave it over, and the young lady was as good as her word; for ſhe put all to the venture, as will appear in the following dialogue.]

DIALOGUE II.

THE young lady mentioned in the foregoing dialogue is now to be viewed in another ſtation of life; ſhe was not altogether ſo thoughtleſs of her circumſtance, or ſo unconcerned as ſhe ſeemed to be by her diſcourſe to her ſiſter about what was before her; but ſhe had not the conduct or re-

ſolution of her ſiſters to carry her through: however, ſhe did take one ſtep ſufficient to leave a ſad example of a father perfectly unconcerned about the religious ſettlement of his children, and making the good of their ſouls no part of his care.

It was but a few days after the diſcourſe which ſhe had held with her ſiſter, that her father and ſhe had the following dialogue one evening, after the gentleman who courted her was gone away; her father being in a parlour all alone, called her to him, and began with her thus.

Fa. Well, child, I ſuppoſe your ceremonies begin to be pretty well over now: when are we to bring this buſineſs to a concluſion?

Da. I am in no haſte, Sir.

Fa. Well, but Mr —— is in haſte; you may be ſure he would be willing to have the inconveniencies of coming and going thus late be over; and as long as both ſides are ſatisfied, why ſhould we keep him in ſuſpenſe?

Da. I do not keep him in ſuſpenſe, Sir.

Fa. Well then, if you are agreed, let us put an end to it, my dear, and tell me what day you will be married, and I'll make the appointment.

Da. Agreed, Sir! I have agreed to nothing, it is all between him and you.

Fa. How do you mean, child? he has now waited on you theſe ſix or ſeven weeks; I hope you know one another's minds before now.

Da. We have ſpent ſix or ſeven weeks indeed in his viſits, talking and rattling of things in general; but I am not much the wiſer for it.

Fa. Why, you are a little better acquainted, I hope, than you were at firſt, child: do you like the gentleman, or have you any thing to object?

Da. Sir, I don't trouble myſelf much with objections; Sir, I leave it all to you; I reſolve to do

as you will have me to do; I won't do as my ſiſter did.

Fa. Well, you are in the right there; but I hope there is no occaſion neither; this gentleman is a man of ſobriety, and of a good character.

Da. I hope, Sir, you have informed yourſelf fully of that; for I leave it all to you, Sir; and about his religion too.

Fa. I have known him a great many years, child; he is a very honeſt good ſort of a gentleman, I aſſure you.

Da. I hope you have good grounds to be ſatisfied, Sir, for I depend upon you, Sir, for every thing: I know you would not propoſe him to me, if he was not a very ſober good man.

Fa. I am thoroughly ſatisfied of that, my dear.

Da. And of his being a religious perſon, Sir? you know what my mother obliged us to on her death-bed: I hope, Sir, you have a good account of his being a ſober religious man? I leave it all to you, Sir.

Fa. Yes, yes, my dear, he is a very religious good man, for ought I know, I aſſure you.

Da. He is a Proteſtant, is not he?

Fa. A Proteſtant, child! yes, yes, he was always a Proteſtant all the while I traded with him; I have had an account of it from ſeveral people. A Proteſtant! yes, yes, you may be ſure he is a Proteſtant, I dare ſay he is.

Da. Well, Sir, if you are ſatisfied, I have no more to ſay.

Fa. Nay, child, why doſt thou put it ſo all upon me? I believe he is a good man, and religious enough; I did not bring him up, nor I have not aſked him how religious he is; I do not enter into theſe things with folks, every one's religion is to himſelf.

Da. Well, Sir, if you are ſatisfied, I muſt be ſatisfied, to be ſure.

Fa. Nay, I would have you be ſatisfied too, child; cannot you aſk him what religion he is of?

[Here the father ſeemed a little unwilling to have it all lie upon him.]

Da. I cannot aſk him ſuch a queſtion, not I; beſides, Sir, if you are ſatisfied, I ſhall look no farther.

Fa. I know not what occaſion there is to be ſo ſcrupulous; you ſee what ridiculous work your ſiſter made of it, and yet married the ſame man two years after.

Da. Sir, I do not make any ſcruples, not I; if you are ſatisfied, I ſhall do as you would have me; I do not ſuppoſe you would have me have him, if he was not a very ſober man.

[She has nothing in her but the ſame dull ſtory of doing every thing her father would have her do.]

Fa. I tell thee, child, I dare ſay he is a very ſober good man, and will make a very kind huſband; I can ſay no more to thee.

Da. All I deſire to know is, that he is a Proteſtant; I hope you are ſure of that, Sir.

Fa. Dear child, what makes thee talk ſo?

Da. He has lived a long while in Italy, Sir, where they ſay, they are all Papiſts.

Fa. Why, ſo did I, child, when I was a young man, but never turned Papiſt; I dare ſay Mr—— is a Proteſtant: I never heard any one ſuſpect him, before.

It may be ſeen by this dull and empty diſcourſe on both ſides, that this poor young lady went on *tanquam boves*, like the ox to the ſlaughter, not knowing, or not conſidering that it was for her life. She reſolved all her ſcruples into that weak way of anſwer-

ing, I leave it all to you, Sir; I hope you are ſatisfied, Sir; and I'll do as you would have me, Sir; and the like; not conſidering that ſhe had a father that laid no ſtreſs upon any thing but the money; his whole care was for the ſettlement, and the eſtate, not inquiring into the principles of the perſon; and therefore his anſwers are as ſilly for a father, as hers are for a wife, *viz.* That he dare ſay the gentleman was a very ſober good man; that he had known him a long time; and did not queſtion but he was a Proteſtant, and the like. In a word, the girl left it all to her father; and the father, perfectly indifferent as to matters of religion, left it out of his inquiry. And thus they were married in a few weeks after, and abundance of mirth and jollity they had; which covered all the appearances of other things for a great while.

At length, the lady went home to her houſe in the city, which was magnificently furniſhed. Among other rich furniture, the rooms were exceedingly ſtored with a noble collection of very fine paintings, done by the beſt maſters in Italy; the part of Italy where this gentleman had lived, *viz.* the Duke of Tuſcany's country, being particularly eminent for choice pictures. It happened after ſhe had been ſome time at home, had ſettled her houſe, and had finiſhed the decorations of her rooms, that her huſband bringing ſome very fine pictures home, which were newly arrived from Italy, had, among others, three very choice pieces hung up in their bedchamber; whereof one being a picture of the criciſixion, extremely valuable and fine, he contrived to have hanged up by the bedſide.

His wife, not uſed to ſuch things, perfectly ignorant of the deſign, not at all acquainted with the uſe made of them in Popiſh countries, took no manner of notice of it at firſt, taking it to be only brought

in there as it was a moſt noble piece of painting; and that her huſband thought it was the beſt thing that he could grace her chamber with. It happened her two ſiſters came together ſome time after, as is uſual, to ſee her houſe, and to ſee the fine collection of paintings, which they had been told ſo much of. And after ſome time, their ſiſter and their new brother led them through all the apartments, which were indeed extremely fine. The brother-in-law, as what he took great delight in, made it his buſineſs to tell them the deſign of the ſeveral pictures, what places or fine houſes ſuch and ſuch repreſented, what ſtories and what faces others were drawn for; and the like. And being his wife's ſiſters, he treated them with all the freedom and kindneſs imaginable.

When they came to the crucifixion, which hung by the bedſide, he told them, there was one of the fineſt pieces of painting in England; told them the name of the painter who had drawn it, who, he ſaid, was one of the beſt maſters in Italy; and I'll aſſure you, ſiſter, ſays he, this is counted a fine thing in Italy.

But why muſt it hang in your bed-chamber, brother? ſays the other married ſiſter, not ſuſpecting any thing; for her eldeſt ſiſter had not told her any thing of what ſhe had ſaid to her ſiſter. O Madam, ſays he, they always have theſe things in their bed-chambers in Italy on a religious account. Well, ſays the ſiſter, but as we do not make uſe of them that way, methinks they are better any where elſe. Why, ſiſter, ſays he, our bedchambers are places where we are, or ought to be moſt ſerious. Why, ſays ſhe again, but we that are Proteſtants do not make a religious uſe of them. Not ſo much perhaps, ſays he, as the Romans do; but I cannot ſay but they may be uſeful to aſſiſt devotion. Not at

all, ſays the ſiſter. At leaſt, Madam, ſays he, they can be no diſadvantage to us; we want all poſſible helps in our adorations.

We have the promiſe of the Spirit of God to aſſiſt us, ſays the ſiſter, very warmly, and need no idolatrous pictures. He ſaw ſhe was tart, and ſeemed to be forward to diſpute, which he avoided; ſo he called them to look on another picture, and that paſſed off the diſcourſe.

After they had gone through ſeveral apartments, and had admired the fine paintings, as indeed they well deſerved, they came to his cloſet. He would have avoided going in, and told them it was in confuſion, and not worth their ſeeing; but his wife having told them it was her huſband's cloſet, they would not be denied. When they went in, they were ſurpriſed with the moſt charming pictures that their eyes had ever beheld, with abundance of rarities, which their new brother, being very curious, had picked up in his travels; and in a little room, on one ſide of his cloſet, upon a table covered with a carpet of the fineſt work they had ever ſeen, ſtood a pix or repoſitory of the hoſt, all of gold, and above them an altar-piece of moſt exquiſite painting. He was indeed jealous of being betrayed by theſe things; but there being none but the ladies, who had never ſeen ſuch things before, and knew nothing by the form, they retired without ſo much as diſcovering what it was; and as for his wife, ſhe was ſo perfectly ignorant, that ſhe was eaſily impoſed upon.

They paſſed from this place to the other ſide of the cloſet, where were abundance of very fine pieces; but here the eldeſt ſiſter could not forbear obſerving, that all the pictures on that whole ſide of the room were religious pieces, and, though ſtill without much ſuſpicion, ſhe ſaid to him, I obſerve, brother, you

gentlemen that have lived in Italy, are ſo in love with Popiſh cuſtoms, that you are always full of theſe church-paintings; here's nothing but repreſentations of Chriſt and the Virgin Mary, in one ſhape or another, in every room in your houſe. She went on jeſtingly for ſome time, till ſhe came to the upper end of the room, to a picture which hung juſt over an eaſy chair, and which had a curtain drawn over it; he thought ſhe would not have let her curioſity outrun her good-manners, and ſo did not apprehend her opening it; but ſhe made no ſcruple of offering to fling back the curtain; but ſoon found it would not run back, being, as ſhe found afterwards, to draw up in feſtoons with pulleys: however, ſhe diſcovered by what ſhe had done, that the picture was the ſame with that in the bedchamber, *viz.* A large crucifix, or picture of the crucifixion.

She ſaid no more, but haſtened to view what was farther to be ſeen, yet ſo as that it was eaſy to diſcover ſhe was in no little diſorder. Her ſiſter that came with her diſcovered it firſt, and aſked what ailed her? Then the new-married ſiſter, whoſe houſe ſhe was in, came to her with the ſame queſtion; ſhe owned to them ſhe was not very well, and that preſently gave her an excuſe to withdraw into the woman's apartment, where ſhe had ſome room to recollect herſelf. However, ſhe took care not to give the leaſt cauſe to ſuſpect what ailed her, till ſhe got an opportunity, when no body was in the room with her but her youngeſt ſiſter, (ſhe who was firſt married,) and then ſhe burſts out into tears, and taking her ſiſter about the neck, with the greateſt paſſion imaginable; O my dear ſiſter, ſays ſhe, this poor child is utterly undone. Undone! ſays her ſiſter, what do you mean? I think ſhe is nobly married. O ſiſter! I tell you ſhe's undone; the

man's a Papiſt! Somebody came into the room juſt as ſhe had ſaid this, ſo that her ſiſter had no time to aſk her any further; and ſhe, to prevent it, added, I'll tell you more by and by; ſo they paſſed it over.

You may be ſure it was, after this, a very uneaſy hour the two ſiſters ſpent in thee ceremonies of their viſit, both longing earneſtly to be at liberty to talk together; one to diſburden her mind, which was oppreſs'd with what ſhe had formerly ſuſpected, and now found confirmed; and the other to hear the particulars of what ſhe was ſo ſurpriſed at.

It was not long before they got away; and as ſoon as ever they were in their coach, the married ſiſter ſaid, Dear ſiſter, you have ſo ſurpriſed me with what you told me juſt now, that I thought every minute an hour till I got away, that I might talk about it; I entreat you what makes you talk as you do?

Eld. Si. O ſiſter! I am too well ſatisfied of it: I am ſure it is ſo. I ſuſpected it all along before they were married, but now I am convinced of it: I am as ſure of it as if I had ſeen him at high maſs.

[Here ſhe tells her what ſhe had obſerved upon his pictures and crucifixes.]

Married Si. Now you ſurpriſe me again; you ſay you ſuſpected it all along.

Eld. Si. Indeed I did; though I own I know no reaſon why I did ſo.

Mar. Si. But why did you not warn her of it? ſhe ought to have known it; certainly ſhe would never have married him if ſhe had known it. That was very unkind, not to warn her of it.

Eld. Si. I did very plainly tell her my ſuſpicions; but as I had no ground to faſten it upon him, it made very little impreſſion upon her; nor could I really ſay it was ſo.

Mar. Si. Well, I would have preſſed her to a ſo-

lemn inquiry into it; you might have prevented her ruin, if you had done it in time; now ſhe is undone indeed, if it be as you ſay, and there is no room to prevent it.

Eld. Si. You cannot think I had ſo little concern for her, as not to tell her my ſuſpicions, and to uſe all the arguments I was capable of, to perſuade and prevail with her to inquire into his principles; for I know too well what the dwelling twenty years in Italy might do.

[Here ſhe recites to her the particulars of the whole dialogue foregoing, between her and her younger ſiſter.]

Mar. Si. Poor child! ſhe is ruined indeed. She has leaped headlong into it, in ſpite of good advice, and her ruin is of her own procuring. But what will you do now, ſiſter? will you let her know it?

Eld. Si. No, no; I won't be the meſſenger of her ſorrows, ſhe'll find it out ſoon enough; the thing will diſcover itſelf too ſoon.

Mar. Si. Dear ſiſter, what does my father ſay to it? does he know it?

Eld. Si. You know, ſiſter, my father give himſelf very little trouble about ſuch things. I dare ſay he never inquired into it, or concerned himſelf about it.

Mar. Si. Does he know any thing of it now?

Eld. Si. Truly I do not know; but I know that after I had preſſed her ſo earneſtly about it, ſhe did mentionit to my father once at a diſtance in their diſcourſe, as that ſhe did not queſtion but he was a good ſober man, or elſe he (her father) would not have recommended him; and added, I hope he is a Proteſtant, Sir?

Mar. Si. Well, what ſaid my father to that part?

Eld. Si. He anſwered after the ſame ſlight way as thoſe do who make the main part none of their care.

Yes, yes, child, a Proteſtant! I dare ſay he is: he was always a Proteſtant when I was in Italy with him, and every body knows he is a Proteſtant; you need not queſtion that, I dare ſay.

Mar. Si. Poor child! ſhe had no ſincere concern upon her about it; if ſhe had, ſhe would not have been put off in a matter of ſo much moment, with a bare ſuppoſition; taking it for granted; or I dare ſay, it is ſo; without inquiring into it.

Eld. Si. It is too true; ſhe has not made it much her concern, and I am ſo much the more afraid for her now.

Mar. Si. Afraid for her, ſay you? what, are you afraid of her turning Papiſt?

Eld. Si. Why, yes, I am. You know I told you what an anſwer ſhe gave me to that very point ſeveral times, *viz.* That if he would not be of her opinion, ſhe would be of his; and that if he was a Chriſtian Catholic, ſhe was a Catholic Chriſtian, and they would have no ſtrife about that, and the like; and yet that is not all my concern, neither.

Mar. Si. What is it then?

Eld. Si. Why, I fear more the inſinuations and ſubtilty of his tongue, his unwearied ſolicitation, the powerful motives of a man perfectly maſter of the art of perſuaſion; and that the more ſweetneſs he has in his temper, (for he is really of a moſt engaging diſpoſition,) the more influence his words will have on her, to win her over to error, not merely in compliance to him as her huſband, but by her not being able to anſwer his reaſonings.

Mar. Si. I confeſs, it is hard to reſiſt the force of thoſe perſuaſions, the reaſons for which we cannot rid our hands of by argument. And one is apt to think, one ought to comply with what we cannot confute; otherwiſe the Papiſts will tell us, we are

Proteſtants, we know not why; a Jew may tell us we are Chriſtians, we know not why; and an Atheiſt may tell us we are religious, we know not why; and ſo on.

Eld. Si. And that which is worſe, there is no breaking the thing to her; to talk to her of it is to anticipate her misfortunes. Perhaps he deſigns to conceal it from her for good and all, and at leaſt it may be a great while before he diſcovers it; and all that time ſhe will be happy, in not thinking herſelf ſo miſerable as ſhe is.

Mar. Si. I allow you, it is not fit to mention it to her firſt; and yet I am afraid, if ſhe finds it out, ſhe will endeavour to conceal it from us.

Eld. Si. I doubt ſo; and by that means we are perfectly deprived of all opportunity of aſſiſting her, or endeavouring to fortify her againſt the inſinuations of any to turn her to Popery.

Mar. Si. But I think we ſhould break it to my father.

Eld. Si. I know not what to ſay to that. I am afraid his indifference in the thing would be a means to diſcover it to her, and bring ſome inconvenience or other with it.

Mar. Si. I do not ſee any danger of that; but I think it is fit he ſhould know it on many accounts.

Eld. Si. I acknowledge I think he ſhould know it, if it were poſſible to engage him not to diſcloſe it; but unleſs it can be done ſo, I would not have any hand in telling it him, upon any account whatever.

[While they were in this dilemma, and doubtful what to do in it, as to telling their father, they were delivered from it, by their father himſelf, as will appear in the following diſcourſe. As ſoon as they came home, their father began with them; for he was more impatient to open his mind to them, than

they were on the other hand doubtful about consulting with him upon this unhappy case: Both sides being therefore willing to talk of it, they could not want an opportunity; and the father, after supper, began it with his new-married daughter thus:]

Fa. Well, Betty, you have been to visit your sister in her new house, I find. How do you like things?

Mar. Si. Sir, she is nobly married, to be sure, she has a house like a palace.

Eld. Si. I think there is the finest paintings that ever I saw in my life. He has laid out vast sums sure in pictures.

Fa. He always had the finest collection of paintings of any merchant in Leghorn. He is a great lover of art, and has a nice judgment, which are the two only things that can make buying so many pictures rational; for his pieces are so well chosen, that he may sell them when he pleases, for above a thousand pounds more than they cost.

Eld. Si. I like his fancy to pictures very well; but methinks, I don't admire his having so many crucifixes and church-pieces among them.

Fa. It is the custom in Italy, child; all people have them.

Eld. Si. That is, because they make a religious use of them. But I think Protestants should not be so fond of them, who make no such use of them. It looks like so Popery, that if the mind was not furnished against them, it seems to give a lift that way; and then I observe he hangs them all just as they do. His crucifixes and passion-pictures hang all by the bedside. His altar-pieces, just at the upper end of the room, or on the east side. I cannot imagine why Protestants, if they will have the pictures, should just hang them in the same places, and mimic the

Catholics in the appearances, as long as they do not make the ſame uſe of them.

[This diſcourſe touched the father to the heart, and, as he ſaid afterwards, he could hardly forbear tears; but he held it in a little longer, and replied, that it was only the cuſtom of the country, and they might think no harm in it; and ſo being willing to put by the diſcourſe, he turns again to his married daughter thus:]

Fa. Well, but, child, how do you like your new brother? for you never ſaw him before, or at leaſt never to converſe with him.

Mar. Si. He is a very fine gentleman, Sir: I was going to wiſh you joy, Sir, and to ſay I was very glad to ſee my ſiſter ſo well married; but ſomething prevented me.

[Now the father could contain himſelf no longer.]

Fa. I know not what prevented you, but I believe it was the ſame that forces me to tell you both, I have no joy in it at all; your ſiſter is undone.

Mar. Si. Undone, Sir! what do you mean? What can be the matter?

Fa. She is undone, indeed, child; and more than that, I have undone her; the man's a Papiſt.

[The father burſt out into tears as ſoon as he had ſpoken the words, and the daughters ſtood as it were ſpeechleſs for ſome time, looking at one another: at laſt the married daughter ſpoke.]

Mar. Si. Are you ſure of it, Sir?

Fa. Ay, ay, I am too ſure of it; I have lived in Italy, and know ſomething of the manner of ſuch things; I preſently diſcovered it.

Eld. Si. Will you pleaſe to tell us how you diſcovered it? for we have had the ſame thoughts, but we durſt not ſpeak our minds about it.

Fa. Child, it is impoſſible for any one that has lived in Italy not to diſcover it, as ſoon as he ſees his houſe.

Eld. Si. What, from the crucifixes and church-pictures I ſpoke of?

Fa. No, no, child: But was you in his cloſet?

Eld. Si. Yes, Sir.

Fa. And was you in an inner-room that you went to through his cloſet, and through another room beyond it?

Eld. Si. Yes, Sir; we were both there, but we ſaw nothing there more than ordinary, only ſtill more church-pieces, as that of the Paſſion, the Salutation, the Aſcenſion, and the like.

Fa. It is becauſe you have not been uſed to ſuch things, child; why, it is his oratory; it is a little conſecrated chapel, and there ſtands an altar and an altar-piece over it, with a crucifix, and the aſcenſion painted above that; on either ſide there are fine rich paintings, one of the baptiſm, and another of the aſſembly at the feaſt of Pentecoſt, and the Holy Ghoſt deſcending in flaming tongues, and the like. But that is not all; for upon the altar is a pix of pure gold, covered with a piece of crimſon velvet, which is the repoſitory, as they call it, of the hoſt.

Eld. Si. I wonder, Sir, he would let you ſee theſe things, if he deſigned to conceal his profeſſion.

Fa. It was all by accident; for when I was in his cloſet, he was called haſtily down, and his wife let me into theſe two rooms: But alas! ſhe knows nothing of the meaning of them, ſhe only takes them to be fine Italian rarities.

Eld. Si. Indeed, I do not wonder at that, for I underſtood them no more than ſhe does: And yet, my ſiſter knows, I preſently entertained the ſame opinion of his religion as you do now; but it was from a picture of the crucifixion that hung by his bedſide with a curtain over it,

Fa. Well, child, yours are ſuſpicions, mine is a certainty. When I charged him with it, he could not deny it; but ſeemed ſurpriſed when he found I had been in his chapel.

Mar. Si. Nay, it is then out of doubt, it ſeems, if he owns it; but what will become of my ſiſter? Now ſhe will have reaſon to ſee how juſt my mother's injunctions were to us all; I fear ſhe will reproach herſelf with the neglect of them.

Fa. My dear, ſhe muſt reproach me with it; it is I have ruined her; I have given her up.

Mar. Si. No, Sir; I think it lay upon her to have inquired into his principles in religion, before ſhe had given herſelf out of her own power.

Fa. My dear, ſhe came to me, and queſtioned with me upon this very point. She aſked me, if he was a Proteſtant, and I encouraged her, told her he was a Proteſtant, and a very good man.

Mar. Si. I ſuppoſe, Sir, you did not ſay poſitively, that you were ſure he was a Proteſtant, but that you believed ſo.

Fa. I aſſured her ſo much of its being my opinion, that I told her ſhe need not fear it: and ſhe again left it all to me, and depended upon me; and it is I that have betrayed and deluded her. In ſhort, I have ſold my child, and the peace of her life, for the toys and fine things of Italy. I have undone her; it is all owing to my being unconcerned for the better part.

Eld. Si. Dear father, do not take the weight of it ſo much upon yourſelf. My ſiſter knows it was her duty to have made a further ſearch into it, and I preſſed her to it in time, and with all poſſible importunity.

Fa. Child, you did right; and I believe ſhe deſigned to follow your directions. But what aſſiſtance did I give to her? How did I damp that reſo-

lution, when I ſtopped her mouth, by telling her, that I dared to ſay he was a Proteſtant? She truſted to my aſſurance, nay, ſhe told me that ſhe did ſo.

[Here the father repeats to her the diſcourſe between him and his daughter, mentioned at the beginning of this dialogue, continuing to reproach himſelf with betraying his child.]

Eld. Si. But, Sir, notwithſtanding all this diſcourſe, (for ſhe told me every word from time to time), I urged her a great many times, and told her my thoughts; for I ſuſpected him from the beginning, and I laboured to convince her, that ſhe ought to ſee with her own eyes, and to talk plainly and openly to him of it.

Fa. Did ſhe not tell you that her father had aſſured her he was a Proteſtant, and that ſhe truſted to that?

Eld. Si. She was more juſt to you, Sir, than to ſay that you aſſured her of it; but ſhe repeated your very words, that you ſaid, you believed it, and dare ſay he was: and I told her plainly that it was evident from your words, that you only ſpoke your opinion, and that ſhe ought not therefore to call that a poſitive aſſurance to be depended upon. Indeed, Sir, I was very plain with her: ſhe has no body to blame but herſelf, I told her.

[Here ſhe repeats all her former diſcourſe with her ſiſter.]

Fa. She has herſelf indeed been to blame for want of reflection upon your ſeaſonable perſuaſions, my dear, and you acted a faithful part to her. But had I been as faithful to her, who was obliged in duty to have done it, and on whom ſhe depended, as you were, who had no obligation but from your affections, I had delivered my child from ruin.

Eld. Si. I cannot ſay, Sir, you had delivered her; ſhe ſeemed reſolved to have him; her eyes were dazzled with the gay things ſhe expected; and unleſs you had poſitively refuſed your conſent, I fear religion had not hold enough on her thoughts, to have balanced her love of vanity.

Fa. But I have been perfectly careleſs of it, and have not done the duty of my place; I ought to have enquired into the circumſtances of the perſon myſelf, and have reſtrained her.

Eld. Si. I am ſorry for her, but I think you reflect on yourſelf too ſeverely, Sir; to be ſure you did not know that he was a Papiſt, neither had you any ſuſpicion of it; but ſhe had; for I put the ſuſpicion into her head, and earneſtly preſſed her to ſatisfy herſelf about it from himſelf.

Fa. My dear, I have been always too careleſs in theſe things. I remember the caſe of your ſiſter here, and cannot but reflect how, when in a paſſion, I told her it was none of my buſineſs, my own heart ſtruck me with reproach; for I know it was my duty. I wiſh this poor child had been as ſtrict and as nice in that matter as her ſiſter was; though I took it ill then, I ſee now ſhe was in the right of it.

Eld Si. You afflict yourſelf, Sir, for a caſe that iſſued well; and where, if you were in the wrong, there were no bad conſequences: whereas, in this caſe, where the bad conſequences have happened, you are no way the cauſe, it is all their own doing.

Fa. But as it is an affliction to me, and that you may be ſure it is, Providence ſeems to ſhew me my ſin by my puniſhment. I acknowledge I was in the wrong before, and it is not owing to my prudence or concern, that your ſiſter was not ruined. Beſides, every father that has a due concern for the ſouls of his children, will certainly inquire narrowly

into the principles, as well as morals of the perſons they match them to.

[In a word, their father afflicted himſelf ſo much and ſo long upon this matter, that his two daughters were obliged to drop their concern for their ſiſter, and apply all the ſkill they had to comfort their father. He was ſo overwhelmed with it, that it threw him into a deep melancholy, and that into a fit of ſickneſs; which, though he recovered, yet he did not in a long time thoroughly enjoy himſelf; always charging and reproaching himſelf with having ruined his child, having regarded nothing but the outſide of things, and referring all her happineſs to a plentiful fortune, and a gay extravagant way of living.

This went on ſome time. The eldeſt daughter, who was left with the father, managed things ſo prudently, that no notice of theſe things was taken in the family, and her father readily agreed with both his daughters, that it was by no means proper to let their ſiſter know what they had diſcovered; concluding, that whenever ſhe diſcovered it herſelf, ſhe would come home with a ſad heart, and make her complaint to them faſt enough.

But they were all miſtaken in their ſiſter; for though ſhe diſcovered the thing, and lived a melancholy life with her huſband upon that occaſion; yet in eight years that ſhe lived with him, ſhe never complained, or made her ſorrows known to any of her relations; but carried it with an even ſteady temper, and bore all her griefs in her own breaſt: as ſhall be ſeen at large in the next dialogue.]

DIALOGUE III.

THE new-married couple, of whom we have been ſpeaking, lived in all the ſplendor and greatneſs that the higheſt degree of private perſons admits of, and which a family poſſeſſed of an immenſe wealth, could be ſuppoſed to do. He was not only very rich when he married her, as might be ſuppoſed by the noble furniture in his houſe, and his very valuable collection of pictures and rarities, and the like, of which mention has been made: but as he fell privately into a great affair of remitting money by way of England to Genoa, for ſupply of the French armies in Italy, he got that way a prodigious ſum of money; and yet acting only by correſpondents at Amſterdam, he was liable to no reſentment or objection from the government here.

After thus he had lived about eight years, and in that time had ſix children by this young lady, he died; ſhe had four of her ſix children living. But their father, after having in vain tried all the perſuaſions, arguments, and entreaties (for he was too good a huſband, and too much a gentleman to uſe any other method), to bring his wife over to the Romiſh church, left her, however, under this terrible affliction, that having diſpoſed of his vaſt eſtate in a very honourable manner, as well to her as to her children, yet he took the education of her children from her, leaving them to the tuition of guardians, to bring them up in the Roman religion. Nor was this the effect of his unkindneſs to her: for, except in diſputes about theſe things, they never had any difference worth the name of a diſpute in their lives; and at his death he left to her own diſpoſal above ſix times the fortune ſhe brought him: but this of his children was a mere point of conſci-

ence to him, which he could not diſpenſe with. This was an inexpreſſible grief to her, and that ſuch and ſo heavy, as it is impoſſible to repreſent it in this narrow tract, ſo as to ſay how far it afflicted her, or what ill conſequences attended it; the drift and deſign of this work alſo lying quite another way, *viz.* To ſhew the manner of life, which naturally attends the beſt matches, where the religious principles of the huſband and wife are not the ſame.

The eldeſt ſiſter was now married alſo, and married very happily and comfortably; the principles as well as practice of her huſband, not only concurred entirely with her own, but anſwered in a moſt agreeable manner to the character which was given to her father of him, *viz.* That he was a perſon truly religious.

Their father now grown old, had been a true penitent for his miſtakes in the paſt conduct of his children, and had fully made up his want of care in his middle daughter's match, by his difficulty in being pleaſed for his eldeſt. She needed no concern for, or to ſhew any nicety in examining into the perſon; for her father was ſo very nice for her, that ſcarce any thing could pleaſe him; he rejected ſeveral very good offers, merely on account of religious principles, and put them off without ſo much as naming them to his daughter, till at laſt, fixing upon a merchant in the city, who, both for ſobriety, piety, and opinion in religion, and eſtate, ſuited every way both his own deſires and his daughter's judgment; the match under ſuch circumſtances was ſoon made. The uninterrupted felicity this young lady enjoyed, in having the beſt huſband, the beſt Chriſtian, and the beſt-tempered man in the world, all in one, made her the happieſt woman alive; and indeed recommended the caution ſhe had always uſed in her choice, by its ſucceſs.

Her father lived with this daughter, when he was in town, but otherwiſe lived in Oxfordſhire, with his own ſiſter, the Lady ——, widow of Sir James ——, of whom mention is made in the firſt part of this work; he lived very eaſy, having thus ſeen his family all ſettled; for his two ſons were very well fixed abroad, the one at Leghorn, and the other at Cadiz; and he might really be ſaid to have no affliction in the world but that of his middle daughter, whom, though by far the richeſt and moſt proſperous in circumſtances, and lived in the moſt ſplendor of all the reſt, yet he eſteemed really miſerable; and ſo indeed in one ſenſe ſhe was.

He was at dinner one day at his eldeſt daughter's houſe, his youngeſt daughter being caſually there alſo, when, while they were at table, letters came from the Bath, where his middle daughter was gone with her huſband, to acquaint them, that her huſband, after an indiſpoſition of no more than five days, was dead. It ſurpriſed them all; for he had not ſo much as heard that he was ill; and his diſtemper being a pleuriſy, it was exceedingly violent, and carried him off very quickly. When their father read the letter, he was extremely ſurpriſed, and riſing up from the table haſtily, Poor child, ſaid he, God has delivered her, but it is by a ſad ſtroke. His daughters got up from table terribly frighted, when they ſaw the diſorder their father was in, not knowing what the matter was; but he perceiving it, turned about ſuddenly, and ſaid, Your ſiſter —— is a widow, and threw down the letter; at this they ſat down again all ſurpriſed, and indeed ſenſibly afflicted; for excepting his religion, which was not all that while made public, he was a moſt obliging relation to them all.

I purpoſely paſs over here the incidents that may be ſuppoſed to happen in the family on ſo ſad an

occaſion; ſuch as the lady's coming up from the Bath; the concern of the father and ſiſters to comfort her: the diſpoſal of herſelf, and the management of her affairs; haſtening to the main ſtory, *viz.* the account ſhe gave of her life paſt, and of what ſhe had gone through in the eight years of her married ſtate, upon the particular occaſion of her huſband's being of a different religion.

It was ſome months after her huſband's death, and when all her affairs were in a ſettled poſture, that ſhe went to divert her thoughts a little, and unbend her mind from the ſorrow ſhe had been under, for ſhe was a ſincere mourner for her huſband; I ſay, it was ſome months after his death, that her younger ſiſter having invited her down to her ſeat in Hampſhire, ſhe went thither, and her father and eldeſt ſiſter, at her requeſt, went all with her.

Here, upon caſual diſcourſing of things paſt, her father, who was almoſt ever bemoaning his neglect in expoſing his children, threw out ſome words, which firſt gave her to underſtand that both he and her ſiſters knew her huſband was not a Proteſtant, at which ſhe ſeemed very much ſurpriſed: but as ſhe found it was known, and that however it was ſtill ſo far a ſecret, as that it had gone no farther than their own breaſts, ſhe was ſoon made eaſy; ſhe then made a confidence of it, earneſtly entreating them that it might go no further, which they willingly promiſed for her ſatisfaction.

But this opened the door for variety of conferences among them; as particularly her ſiſters told her how they diſcovered it firſt, and afterwards their father; and repeated all the diſcourſes they had had about it, and how, and for what reaſon they had reſolved never to mention it to her, unleſs ſhe ſpoke firſt of it; concluding, that perhaps he might conceal it from her, and they would be very

loath to diſcover a thing to her, which they knew could have no other conſequences at that time, but to ruin and afflict her: Alas, ſiſter! ſays ſhe, I diſcovered it within a fortnight after I came home.

Ay! ſays the youngeſt ſiſter, you had a good government of yourſelf to refrain unboſoming to ſome of us; eſpecially conſidering my ſiſter here (meaning her eldeſt ſiſter) had been ſo ſerious with you upon that very head before you were married.

Dear ſiſter, ſays the widow, to what purpoſe is it for any woman, when ſhe is married, to complain of her diſappointments, which ſhe knows ſhe cannot mend?

Yo. Si. That's true, my dear; but who is there can deny themſelves that eaſe to their grief?

Wid. Alas! complaining is but a poor eaſe to ſuch ſorrows; it is like ſighing, which relieves the heart one moment, and doubly loads it the next.

Yo. Si. Well, ſiſter, ſeeing you had ſo entire a maſtery over yourſelf in that part, and you brought the dominion of your reaſon over your paſſions to ſo perfect an exerciſe, which is what I confeſs I muſt admire you for; I ſay, ſeeing you maſtered yourſelf ſo well that way, I am obliged to think you maſtered yourſelf as well within doors; and with good conduct perhaps you made it no inconvenience to you. I wiſh you would let us hear how you managed, that we may ſee, perhaps, difference of opinion may be ſo managed as to make no breaches in a family, and it might be as well as if it had been otherwiſe.

Wid. No, no, ſiſter, do not fancy ſo: our dear mother was wiſer than ſo, and you were all wiſer than I, to lay ſo much ſtreſs upon it as you did; I am a convert now to my mother's inſtructions, though it be too late to help it.

Yo. Si. Why, Mr ——— and you lived mighty

eaſy: you were always mighty well with one another, I thought.

Wid. It was impoſſible to be ill with him, he was of ſo excellent a temper: but this makes my caſe perfectly inſtructing to others, and proves effectually, that no goodneſs of the diſpoſition, no exceſs of affection, no prudent compliances, though they make the caſe rather better than worſe, can yet make up, no not in the leaſt, or any way balance the inexpreſſible deficiency that ſuch a breach in religious matters makes in a family.

Fa. Ay, ay, my dear; I ſee it now, with a ſad heart, but it was far from any of my thoughts then; you owe all the miſery of it to my neglect.

Wid. Sir, I dare ſay, you did not miſtruſt it; I remember you ſaid, he had always been a Proteſtant when you was at Leghorn, and that you knew he was bred ſo.

Fa. Ay, my dear, but it was my buſineſs to have inquired farther into it; I might eaſily have known it, if I had inquired; for ſeveral merchants told me afterwards of it; but I laid no ſtreſs upon it; in ſhort, I did not conſider the conſequences.

Yo. Si. There is no need to afflict yourſelf now, Sir, about it; my ſiſter is delivered another way, Sir, and the thing is over.

Fa. But I am a warning to all parents, that have the good of their children at heart, never to make light of ſuch things, but to ſearch them to the bottom; and the more their children depend upon them, the greater is their obligation to be very careful.

Yo. Si. Well, my ſiſter is delivered from it all now.

Wid. It is a ſad deliverance, ſiſter; it is a dreadful caſe to be ſo married, as that the death of a huſband ſhould be counted a deliverance; and eſpecially of a good huſband too.

Yo. Si. I do believe he was a good huſband indeed, that one particular excepted; but that was a terrible circumſtance, and would have made the beſt huſband in the world a bad huſband to me.

Wid. Ay, child, and ſo it did to me in ſome caſes, though he was otherwiſe the beſt-humoured man, and the beſt huſband imaginable.

Yo. Si. No queſtion, there was ſome uneaſineſs at firſt; but it ſeems you got over it. I wiſh you would tell us, ſiſter, how you managed the firſt diſcovery between you.

Wid. Truly, ſiſter, the uneaſineſs was not ſo much at firſt as at laſt, and had we lived longer together, it muſt of neceſſity have grown worſe, eſpecially as the children grew up.

Yo. Si. Indeed there you might have come to claſh in matters very eſſential to your peace.

Wid. Might have claſhed, do you ſay! indeed, ſiſter, we muſt have claſhed, it was unavoidable; it could not be that I could be eaſy to have the children bred Papiſts, or that he could have been eaſy to have them bred, as he called it, heretics.

Yo. Si. It was impoſſible indeed; and the more you were both ſettled and ſerious in your opinions, the more impoſſible it would be for you to yield that point to one another.

Wid. Why, you know, ſiſter, Mr —— was a very ſerious grave man; and I aſſure you, in his way, he was very devout; and this made his yielding to me ſometimes to be very difficult to him. He had very ſtrong ſtruggles between his principles and his affection.

Eld. Si. Dear ſiſter, it is always ſo where there are differing opinions between a man and his wife; the more zealous and conſcientious they are in their ſeveral ways, the more difficult it is for them to yield thoſe points up to one another, which kindneſs and

affection may incline them to give up. But pray give us a little account of your firſt diſputes about theſe things.

Wid. It is a ſad ſtory, ſiſter, and will bring many grievous things to remembrance.

Eld. Si. I ſhould be very unwilling to impoſe ſo irkſome a taſk upon you; but I think it will be very inſtructing to us all.

Wid. Why, it was not much above a fortnight after we came home, as I obſerved to you, before I diſcovered it; and the manner was thus. I wondered that every Sabbath-day my ſpouſe contrived ſome excuſe or other to avoid going to church with me. I had taken ſome notice of it before we went home; but the ſecond Sabbath-day I took upon me to deſire him to go. He ſeemed not to deny me, and went into the coach with me, but pretended a ſudden thought, he was obliged to go up to St James's; and having very civilly handed me out of the coach, and gone with me into the very place, made a light bow, when I could not ſtand to perſuade, and went back.

Si. What, did he take the coach too, and leave you to come home on foot?

Wid. No, no; he never ſhewed me ſo little reſpect as that. He went but as far as Temple-Bar in the coach, and ſent it back, charging the coachman to go and wait for his miſtreſs, which he did. This however troubled me not a little, and I began to be uneaſy, though I knew not for what.

Si. Why, my dear, did nothing occur to your thoughts, as it did to ours, about his pictures, his crucifixes, altar-pieces, and ſuch things?

Wid. No, not at all. I had heard my father ſay it was the faſhion in Italy; and it being ſo remote from my thoughts to imagine any thing of what was the real caſe, I had indeed no thoughts at all

about it, till the following affair alarmed me. I was with him one day in his cloſet, and viewing his fine things, the pictures, imagery, and other rarities, of which he had abundance, and ſome pieces of antiquity, that are of very great value: he was mighty buſy, and pleaſed in ſhewing me things, and telling me what they were; for then they were as new to me almoſt as they were to you. At laſt I went into the little room within his cloſet, and looked upon all the fine things there, where you know, ſiſter, there are abundance of valuable pieces of paintings.

Si. Yes, indeed it is a charming place.

Wid. Upon the table there ſtood two fine ſilver candleſticks gilded, with large wax-candles in them: My dear, ſays I, like an innocent fool, theſe candleſticks are very fine; I think they are much finer than any we have about the houſe. My dear, ſays he, if you had rather have them in your cloſet, than let them ſtand here, they ſhall be removed. No, my dear, ſaid I, if we ſhould want them upon an extraordinary occaſion, it is but borrowing them of you. We ſaid no more of that then, but the next day he ſent me in from a goldſmith's in Drury-lane two pair of candleſticks larger and finer than theſe, of very curious workmanſhip, and all the high embоſſed work double-gilt.

Yo. Si. So you had no need to grudge him thoſe he uſed in his cloſet any more.

Wid. No indeed. But to go on: After I had done ſpeaking of the candleſticks, I laid my hands upon a large piece of crimſon damaſk, which ſeemed to cover ſomething that ſtood upon the table, and ſtanding up about ſeven or eight inches high in the middle, looked as if there were ſeveral things together; and going to turn it up, I ſaid, What is under here, my dear? but added with a ſmile, and

thinking nothing of the matter, May I look? He ſmiled a little, but laying his hand upon it too, ſaid, I had rather not, my dear; they are things I brought from Italy, but nothing of ornament. Well, well, ſays I, let it lie; I don't deſire to look, not I; and immediately turned to look at a picture that hung near me; and all this while I was ſo dull as to perceive nothing.

Eld. Si. Your curioſity was not much, it ſeems.

Wid. Innocence ſuſpects nobody; but a ſtrange turn in his countenance gave me an alarm, which I was not aware of; for there was a viſible hurry and confuſion in his face when he laid his hands upon the piece of damaſk to prevent my taking it up; and on a ſudden, when I ſo eaſily and unconcernedly paſſed it off, all that chagrin went off his countenance in a moment, and he was as bright and as good-humour'd again as ever; and this made me think afterwards that there was ſomething in it more than uſual.

Eld. Si. You muſt have been very dull, if you had not, ſeeing you perceived ſuch a double alteration; and this would have heightened my deſire to enquire farther into it.

Wid. Perhaps it did ſo too in me; but I ſaw evidently he was concerned; and why ſhould I make him uneaſy? I could have paſſed a hundred ſuch things by, and have reſtrained my curioſity while I had no ſuſpicion.

Eld. Si. Well, but what was this to the caſe? it ſeems here was no diſcovery then.

Wid. Yes, here was a diſcovery too, as it prepared for farther obſervation: I told you that the next day he ſent me home two pair of candleſticks, which were indeed very fine; and as I was admiring them, I deſired to have the other fetch'd down to compare them with; upon which he made ſome difficulty,

and ſaid, he could not truſt a ſervant to go into his cloſet alone, where things of conſequence lay about; but, my dear, ſays he, we will go up and match them.

Eld. Si. Well, that reaſon was juſt enough.

Wid. It was ſo; and I went up with him to his cloſet, but not into the inner room; but I obſerved juſt when he ſtept in, he made an extraordinary low bow towards that place where the candleſticks ſtood. Indeed I took no notice of it at firſt, for I verily thought he had ſtooped for ſomething; but when he carried the candleſticks in again, he did the ſame, and that gave me ſome thought.

Yo. Si. That was a diſcovery indeed.

Wid. No really, it was not yet; for I was a perfect ſtranger to any of their Popiſh ceremonies; I ſcarce underſtood it when I was told: But however it gave me ſome idea of this being an extraordinary place, though I did not know what; and I very innocently aſked him this fooliſh laughing queſtion; My dear, you are mighty mannerly to your empty rooms, you bow as if the king was there. He put it off with a ſmile, and an anſwer that was indeed according to Solomon, Anſwer a fool in his folly: My dear, ſays he, it is our cuſtom in Italy.

Eld. Si. He was no fool; what he ſaid was very true.

Wid. Well, even all this while, and farther, I was ſtill blind; for a little while after I puſhed into the ſame place with him, not out of curioſity, but merely by chance; but though the piece of crimſon damaſk lay upon the table, yet there was nothing under it, nor did he make any bow as before.

Yo. Si. No, my dear, there was no need of it then; for to be ſure the idol was removed,

Wid. Well, however, as that was more than I knew, it cauſed all my former heſitations and ob-

ſervations to vaniſh, till they were renewed again upon the following occaſion: He was taken ill one evening, in a manner that alarmed me very much, and we were obliged to get him to bed with all ſpeed; but juſt as he was undreſſing by the bed-ſide, he ſtarted up in a kind of rapture, and pulling a ſtring which drew back a curtain, he caſt up his eyes towards a picture that hung there, and ſaid ſome words which I did not underſtand, and I perceived he croſſed himſelf two or three times on the breaſt, and then ſtept into bed.

Fa. To one that had lived in Italy, this had been no novelty at all.

Wid. No, Sir, I underſtood it well enough now, but I did not then; however, it was ſo plain then, that it needed no explanation to me; but it was ſuch a ſurpriſe to me, that I thought I ſhould have fainted; my heart ſunk within me, and with a ſigh, ſaid I to myſelf, O Lord! I am undone! I thought I had ſpoken ſo ſoftly, that nothing could have overheard me; but yet ſo unhappy was my paſſion, that he heard the laſt words, and raiſing his voice, My dear, ſays he haſtily, what's the matter? what art thou undone for? I made him no anſwer, which increaſed his eagerneſs to know what ail'd me; but I declined it. At laſt, preſſing me ſtill, I anſwered, My dear, excuſe me for the preſent, I am a little frighted; with which he rings a little bell, that I uſed to ring for my woman, and ſhe being but in the next room, came running in: I bade her fetch me a little bottle out of my cloſet, and taking a few drops, rather by a counterfeit illneſs than a real, put an end to his inquiry, and got him to ſleep.

Eld. Si. I ſhould even have charged him with it downright, and have raved at him for a rogue, that had cheated and deluded me.

Wid. Indeed, ſiſter, I did not do ſo; I was op-

preſſed with the terror of it, and the diſappoinment; but my affection ſtept in the way of all reſentment; I loved him tenderly; and beſides, it was not a time for it; for he was really very ill, and I thought he ſhould have died; it was a ſpice or taſte of the ſame diſtemper that did at laſt kill him, for it was a pleuriſy: and after he had ſlept a little, he waked again in ſuch a condition, that frighted all the houſe, and we were forced to fetch a ſurgeon out of his bed to let him blood.

Si. Well, that relieved him, I hope.

Wid. Yes, it did; but I name it to tell you a circumſtance which attended it: we had in the houſe an old man, an Italian, whom he always kept in the counting-houſe to copy his letters, and tranſlate his Italian accounts, and for ſuch other buſineſs as he employed him in; and they called him *Doctor:* the ſurgeon we had ſent for, being in bed, did not come time enough, and he grew black and deſperately ill, which frighted me exceedingly; and when he ſaw I was under a ſurpriſe, he made ſigns (for he could not ſpeak to be underſtood, he was ſo bad) to call up the old Italian. When he came into the room, he held out his arm, and pointing at it with his finger, every one might underſtand that he meant he ſhould let him blood; upon which immediately the old man called for things proper, and I found he had a launcet in his pocket. I aſked him, if he had been uſed to it: he ſaid, Yes, Madam, I have let him blood ſeveral times before now. In a word, he opened a vein, and it gave him eaſe, and he recovered ſoon after.

Fa. I'll lay a hundred pounds, then, that doctor is a prieſt.

Wid. Yes, Sir, he is ſo; and I knew it quickly after.

Fa. And after he knew that you underſtood it,

did he not beſiege you with his diſcourſes and importunities, my dear, to turn?

Wid. No really; at leaſt not ſo, as I believe is uſual; he frequently let fall ſome words about it, but with great modeſty; for he was really a very good ſort of man, exceeding retired and devout; very mannerly and reſpectful: he ſpoke once at table, (for ſometimes my ſpouſe would aſk me to let him ſup with us), and we had been talking very chearfully, when the Doctor ſaid ſomething in Italian to his maſter, that gave me plain reaſons to know, that he deſired I ſhould know what he ſaid; upon which my ſpouſe ſaid to me, My dear, what do you think the Doctor ſays? I do not know, but I am ſure it is about me. Yes, ſays he, ſo it is; and he ſays I muſt tell you what it is, or elſe you will think he is unmannerly, to ſpeak any thing in a language you do not underſtand. Well, pray, ſaid I, what is it he ſays? What pity is it, ſaid my ſpouſe, ſuch a fine genius as my lady your wife is, ſhould not be within the pale of the Catholic church! While my ſpouſe was telling me this, he looked very earneſtly at him, to obſerve when he repeated the words; and juſt as he repeated them, the good old father lift up his eyes, and ſaid ſome words ſoftly, but with great appearance of ſerioufneſs, which it ſeems was to pray to Chriſt to convert me; and my ſpouſe looking very ſeriouſly too, croſſed himſelf, and ſaid, Amen.

Yo. Si. This was dangerous work indeed, ſiſter; for the more ſerious they were in it, the more it would have affected me.

Wid. Indeed ſo it did me; I anſwered my huſband, My dear, I hope I am; and if I thought I was not, I would not ſleep till I was. At which the Doctor, my ſpouſe repeating the words to him, ſhook his head, and ſaid, No, no! ſignifying that to be ſure I was not; and added, he hoped God

would hear his prayers for me; but this was the moſt that ever he offered that way.

Fa. Well, that was nothing but what any man who thought himſelf in the right, might do, and very modeſtly too.

Wid. Indeed he always kept himſelf rather at a greater diſtance than we deſired.

Yo. Si. Well, but pray go back to the ſtory.

Wid. Why, I told you my huſband recovered from his illneſs; but it was otherwiſe with me; for being now fully ſatisfied that my ſpouſe was a Papiſt, it caſt me down to that degree, and overwhelmed my ſpirits, that I was ſcarce able to bear it, and eſpecially for want of ſomebody to lodge my thoughts with, and open my ſoul to.

Eld. Si. Why, did you not charge him with it point blank? did he not perceive your diſorder?

Wid. He did to be ſure, and preſſed me with the utmoſt tenderneſs and importunity, to let him know what grieved me.

Eld. Si. Ay, and I ſhould have told him of it in his ears.

Wid. Dear ſiſter, you are too tender a wife yourſelf, not to know, that where there is a ſincere affection, even the higheſt reſentment expreſſes itſelf in the ſofteſt terms. I could afflict myſelf freely, but I could not think of afflicting him: and though I do acknowledge I thought myſelf ill treated, yet I could not uſe him ill in return.

Si. Come, tell us what you ſaid to him.

Wid. Why, when he preſſed me to let him know what diſturbed me, I told him I had rather bear my grief than complain to him; that I was too ſenſible he knew what I meant, when I ſaid I was undone; and I begged him not to oblige me to blame him, for not having been juſt to me. Why, my dear, ſays he, why are you undone? if your opinion in

religion and mine may differ, muſt it affect our love? cannot we be dear to one another, without entering into diſputes of that kind? Yes, ſaid I, my dear, I know better than to enter into diſputes with you; but I muſt reckon myſelf undone for all that. Tears ſtopt my very breath for a while, for this was an open acknowledgement of his profeſſion; and I would fain have flattered myſelf ſo much, as to hope there was yet ſome room to have thought myſelf miſtaken. When he ſaw me ſo overwhelmed, he came to me, and took me in his arms, and ſaid all the kind things it is poſſible to think of, to pacify me: My dear, ſays he, though you may think this a grief to you, expect to have it made up abundantly, by all that it is poſſible for man to do to oblige you. And indeed, if all the affectionate things a man could ſay or do, could make it up, it was made up to me; if it was poſſible for a man to do any thing to make a woman forget her diſappointment, he did it; and this from a man too, who had a perfect underſtanding of every thing that could oblige and engage the affections; in a word, no man could do more, or woman deſire more, to make up the loſs.

Eld Si. Well, ſiſter, and pray tell me, did it do? was it fully made up to you? is it poſſible that two can be happy in the condition of man and wife, where opinions in religion differ? You have had the experience of it, to be ſure, in its beſt fortune, with all the advantages imaginable: now be plain, and tell us, is it poſſible the conjugal felicity can be complete? was our dear mother in the right or no, ſiſter?

Wid. Indeed, ſiſter, you put hard upon me, becauſe I know I too much ſlighted my mother's injunctions; and I remember I jeſted with you about it; but I paid for the experiment.

Eld. Si. Dear ſiſter, thoſe things are forgotten

long ago; I did not intend to reflect upon them; but I aſk upon a ſerious account, I aſſure you.

Wid. Why, truly, ſiſter, I muſt acknowledge it is impoſſible: I ſay again, I find by ſad experience, it is impoſſible: no kindneſs, no tenderneſs, no affection, can make it up; the condition can never be happy, God faithfully ſerved, children rightly educated, the mind perfectly eaſy, or the duty of the relation faithfully performed, where their opinions in religion differ.

Eld. Si. I am of opinion alſo, that it would have been the ſame, though your differences had not been ſo great as that of Papiſt and Proteſtant.

Wid. Ay, ay, all one! for we never entered into the queſtion about our principles: I reſolved it from the beginning to avoid bringing on any thing that might be unkind or diſobliging between us, and he approved it, and did the ſame for the ſame reaſon; ſo that I never, after the firſt diſcourſe, ſo much as inquired what his opinion was: it was ſufficient to have the grief that we could not worſhip God together, either abroad or at home; we could not think of one another with charity, but as deceived perſons, out of the way of eternal felicity, out of God's bleſſing and protection; we could not look upon one another but with ſighs and ſad hearts. Again, we could never converſe with one another upon religious ſubjects, for we could not enter upon the leaſt ſerious thing, but it led us into contradictions and wild diſtracted notions, which we were immediately forced to take the help of our affections to ſuppreſs, that we might not break out into indecencies to one another.

Si. Yo. Well, ſiſter, and what became of your ſmart anſwers to my ſiſter ———, when ſhe and you talked of theſe things, *viz.* That if he was not of your opinion, you would be of his; that if he was a Chriſtian Catholic, you was a Catholic Chri-

ſtian; and ſo you would have no difference about that?

Wid. Why, truly, ſiſter, I was young, and did not conſider what I ſaid; and beſides, I did not in the leaſt ſuſpect what my ſiſter ſuggeſted; and yet ſo far I have kept up to it, we have, by the help of abundance of good humour on his ſide, and a great deal of love on both ſides, avoided differences and diſputes upon that ſubject: but alas! ſiſter, that is but a negative, and it can only be ſaid we did not quarrel, which is a great deal to ſay too: but what is this to a happy life? how was our family guided, our children educated, and how would they have been educated, if he had lived? and how was God worſhipped? he and his prieſt at their maſs in the oratory or chapel; I, and my unhappy babes in my chamber and cloſet, where I mourned over them continually, (rather than prayed over them,) to think that, ſome time or other, they ſhould be ſnatched from me, and brought up in Popery: nor would it have been much otherwiſe, if he had been of any other irreconcileable opinion; for, as I told you before, though I knew his opinion, I never aſk'd it; for any opinion, where there is not a harmony in worſhipping, a joining in public prayer to God, and in joint ſerving him in our families, is the ſame thing, only not in the ſame extreme.

Yo. Si. Well, but had you no private breaches about it?

Wid. No, never; we carefully avoided it: But this is but an evidence of the dreadful conſequences of ſuch marriages in general: for where is there a couple that can ſay, as we could, that they have had no jars about it? And what breaches have religious differences made in families? But if the happineſs is ſo little, and the evil conſequences ſo many, even with a huſband ſo exquiſitely kind and obliging, and

where a woman cannot say she has any one thing to complain of, what must be the case in other families?

Yo. Si. But, sister, you hint that the longer you lived, the worse those differences grew.

Wid. Why, it was impossible, sister, but as we grew forward, these things must have come more in our way; we have four children, and Mr ——— was not a man so indifferent in his religion, as to be more careless about the souls of his children, that I assure you; and though he left them entirely to my management when they were little, yet he would hint sometimes, that he hoped I would leave them free, when they grew up to chuse for themselves, as God should enlighten them; and that at least we should both stand neuter.

Yo. Si. What could you say to that?

Wid. I told him, I could not tell how far I could promise that; for if I thought myself in the right way to heaven, I could but ill answer it to him that gave me my children, to stand still and see them go wrong, and not endeavour to persuade them (at least) to chuse better for themselves. He told me, that was an argument just as strong on his side, as it was on mine: and he added, smiling, How shall we do then to agree, my dear, when it comes to that? I hope we shall not love less than we do now. I told him, I had a great many melancholy thoughts about it; and thus at last we were always fain to drop the discourse: but to this hour I cannot conceive how we should have done to have divided our childrens instruction between us, if he had lived to see them grow up.

Fa. Well, my dear, God has otherwise ordered it; and I hope the children will have the benefit of a good instruction now without that interruption.

Wid. Alas! Sir, I perceive you do not know their case yet; and this is a remaining grief to me that I have not yet mentioned.

Fa. What's that, child?

Wid. Why, Sir, by his will he has appointed the old prieſt, whom I named above, to be tutor to my two ſons, and has ſettled his eſtate ſo, that unleſs the truſtees bring them up Roman Catholics, a great deal of the eſtate goes from them; ſo that I am to be robbed of my children.

Fa. I am ſurpriſed at that: why, I never heard of a word of it! and what has he done with his two daughters?

Wid. He has left them to me.

Fa. Did you know this before, child? had you any diſcourſe about it before he died?

Wid. Yes, Sir, as much as the violence of his diſtemper would admit; I entreated, I perſuaded, I argued, as much as tears and my oppreſſed thoughts would allow me; for I thought my heart would have burſt while I talked to him, to ſee his condition, whom I loved as my own ſoul, and to think what was to befall my children: you can hardly conceive what a time it was to me; it wounds my very ſpirit to look back upon it.

Eld. Si. It was a very bitter thing, no doubt; but what ſaid he to you?

Wid. He begged of me not to importune him: He told me it was far from being an unkindneſs to me, but his conſcience obliged him to it, and he could not die in peace, if he did not, as far as in him lay, provide for the ſouls of his children.

Fa. Why, if it was his conſcience, how came it to paſs he did do the like by his daughters?

Wid. Why, he ſaid he thought I had a right to their government, as a half of the family; for, my dear, ſays he, we are partners: But, ſays he, I entreat you, and, as far as I am able to do it, injoin you to it, let the poor innocent babes be reconciled to the church, and brought up in the Catholic

faith: and I hope you will, in God's due time, embrace it yourſelf.

Yo. Si. What was you able to ſay to him?

Wid. I bleſs God I made no promiſe about my children; nor indeed was I able to ſpeak to him for grief; for he was in ſuch agonies, that my heart could not hold to ſtay by him; and the next morning he died; and now I am a dreadful example of the miſerable condition of a married ſtate, where principles of religion differ, though with the beſt huſband in the world.

Fa. But, my dear, do not afflict yourſelf now about your ſons.

Wid. Not afflict myſelf, Sir! Is that poſſible?

Fa. Yes, yes, they ſhall not be bred up Papiſts, I'll aſſure you, for all that he has done to bring it to paſs.

Wid. Alas! Sir, they will be taken away from me.

Fa. No, no; nor ſhall they be taken away from you neither; your law gives you a right to the bringing up your own children; and as for the Doctor, I'll engage he ſhall give you no diſturbance: he knows his own circumſtances, and I'll take care that he ſhall take it for a favour to be concealed here, and leave it all to you.

Wid. But then the eſtate will go from my children too.

Fa. Perhaps not neither; but if it ſhould, you have enough for them.

Wid. Well that's none of my care; let me but keep them from a wrong education, I'll willingly leave that part to fall as it will.

Yo. Si. But, dear ſiſter, did Mr —— never try you by arguments, to bring you over to him?

Wid. Only by all that he could ever adviſe; except, as I ſaid before: For I muſt do that juſtice to his memory, that he never offered any thing that

was rough, or threatening, or limiting, or unkind; but all the contrary, to the higheſt extreme.

Yo Si. That was the effect of his extraordinary good breeding, and his being ſo much a gentleman.

Wid. Not that altogether, ſiſter, though that might join; but it was the effect of an excellent diſpoſition, and of an inexpreſſible affection to me in particular; for otherwiſe he was the moſt zealous man in his way that ever was heard of, and thought every body an enemy to him that would not be of his own opinion.

Eld. Si. Did he never go about to bribe you to it?

Wid. O ſiſter! very frequently; and that with all the ſubtilty of invention in the world; for he was always giving me preſents upon that very account.

Fa. Preſents to a wife! What do they ſignify? It is but taking his money out of one pocket, and putting it into the other; they muſt all be appraiſed, child, in the perſonal eſtate.

Wid. It has been quite otherwiſe with him indeed, Sir; for he made it a clauſe in his will, that all the preſents he gave me ſhall be my own, to beſtow how I pleaſe; beſides all the reſt that he has left me more than he was obliged to do.

Eld. Si. Then they ſeem to be conſiderable.

Wid. He has, firſt and laſt, given me above 3000 pounds in preſents, and moſt of them on this very account. But one was very extraordinary, I mean to that purpoſe.

Eld. Si. I ſuppoſe that is your diamond croſs.

Wid. It is ſo; he brought it home in a little caſe, and coming into my room one morning before I was dreſſed, hearing I was alone he told me ſmiling and very pleaſant, he was come to ſay his prayers to me. I confeſs, I had been a little out of humour juſt at that time, having been full of ſad thoughts all that morning, about the grand point, and I was

going to have given him a very unkind anſwer; but his looks had ſo much goodneſs and tenderneſs always in them, that when I looked up at him, I could retain no more reſentment: Indeed, ſiſter, it was impoſſible to be angry with him.

Eld. Si. You might well be in humour indeed, when he brought you a preſent worth above ſix hundred pounds.

Wid. But I had not ſeen the preſent, when what I am going to tell you paſſed between us.

Eld. Si. Well, I aſk pardon for interrupting you; pray go on where you left off, when he told you he was come to ſay his prayers to you.

Wid. I told him, I hoped he would not make an idol of his wife.

Eld. Si. Was that the ill-natured anſwer you were about to give him?

Wid. No, indeed; I was a going to tell him, he need not worſhip me, he had idols enough in the houſe.

Eld. Si. That had been bitter and unkind indeed. I hope you did not ſay ſo?

Wid. Indeed I did not; nor would I have ſo for a thouſand pounds; it would have grieved me every time I had reflected on it afterwards, as long as I had lived.

Eld. Si. It was ſo very apt a return, I dare ſay I ſhould not have brought my prudence to have maſtered the pleaſure of ſuch a rapartee.

Wid. Dear ſiſter, it is a ſorry pleaſure that is taken in grieving a kind huſband; beſides, ſiſter, as it was my great mercy that my huſband ſtrove conſtantly to make his difference in religion as little troubleſome and offenſive to me as poſſible, it would very ill have become me to make it my jeſt; it had been a kind of beſpeaking the uneaſineſs which it was my happineſs to avoid.

Eld. Si. Well, you had more temper than I ſhould have had, I dare ſay; but I muſt own you were in the right. Come, pray, how did you go on?

Wid. Why, he anſwered, he hoped he worſhipped no idols but me; and if he erred in that point, whover reproved him, he hoped I would not.

Eld. Si. Why, that is true too: beſides, it is not ſo often that men make idols of their wives.

Wid. Well, while he was ſaying this, he pulls out the jewel, and opening the caſe, takes a ſmall crimſon ſtring that it hung to, and put it about my neck, but kept the jewel in his hand, ſo that I could not ſee it; and then taking me in his arms, Sit down, my dear, ſays he; which I did upon a little ſtool. Then he kneeled down juſt before me, and kiſſing the jewel, let it go, ſaying ſomething in Italian, which I did not underſtand; and then looking up in my face, Now, my dear, ſays he, you are my idol.

Eld. Si. Well, ſiſter, it is well he is dead.

Wid. Dear ſiſter, how can you ſay ſuch words to me?

Eld. Si. He would certainly have conquered you at laſt.

Wid. If the tendereſt and moſt engaging temper, the ſincereſt and warmeſt affection in nature could have done it, he would have done it, that's certain.

Eld. Si. And I make no doubt but they are the moſt dangerous weapons to attack a woman's principles. I cannot but think them impoſſible to reſiſt: Paſſion, unkindneſs, and all ſorts of conjugal violence, of which there is a great variety in a married life, are all nothing to them. You remember, ſiſter, ſome lines on another occaſion, but very much to the caſe;

Force may indeed the heart invade,
But kindneſs only can perſuade.

Wid. I grant that it is difficult to reſiſt the influence of ſo much affection; and every thing that came from ſo ſincere a principle, and to a mind prepoſſeſſed with all the ſentiments of tenderneſs and kindneſs poſſible to be expreſſed, made a deep impreſſion; but I thank God I ſtood my ground.

Eld. Si. Well, you would not have ſtood it long, I am perſuaded; and this is one oft he great hazards a woman runs in marrying a man of a differing religion, or a differing opinion from herſelf, *viz.* That her affection to her huſband is her worſt ſnare; and ſo that which is her duty and her greateſt happineſs, is made the moſt daugerous gulf ſhe can fall into. Well might our dear mother warn us from marrying men of different opinions.

Wid. It is very true, I acknowledge it; my love was my temptation, my affection to my huſband went always neareſt to ſtagger my reſolution; I was in no danger upon any other account.

Yo. Si. Well, but pray go on about the jewel; what ſaid you to him?

Wid. Truly, ſiſter, I'll be very plain with you: When he kiſſed the jewel on his knees, and muttered, as I tell you, in Italian, I was rather provoked than obliged; and I ſaid, I think you are ſaying your prayers indeed, my dear. Tell me what are you doing? what did you ſay?

Yo. Si. Indeed I ſhould have been frighted.

Wid. Dear ſiſter, let me confeſs to you, fine preſents, flattering words, and the affectionate looks of ſo obliging, ſo dear, and ſo near a relation, are dreadful things, when they aſſault principles; the glittering jewel had a ſtrange influence, and my affections began to be too partial on his ſide: O let no woman that values her ſoul, venture into the arms of a huſband of a differing religion! The kinder he is, the more likely to undo her; every

thing that endears him to her, doubles her danger; the more ſhe loves him, the more ſhe inclines to yield to him; the more he loves her, the ſtronger are the bonds by which he draws her; and her only mercy would be, to have him barbarous and unkind to her.

Yo. Si. It is indeed a ſad caſe, where to be miſerable is the only ſafety; but ſo it is, no doubt; and ſuch is the caſe of every woman that is thus unſuitably matched. If her huſband is kind, he is a ſnare to her; if unkind, he is a terror to her; his love, which is his duty, is her ruin; and his ſlighting her, which is his ſcandal, is her protection.

Wid. It was my caſe, dear ſiſter; ſuch a jewel! ſuch a huſband! how could I ſpeak an unkind word? Every thing he did was ſo engaging, every thing he ſaid was ſo moving, what could I ſay or do?

Eld. Si. Very true; and that makes me ſay, he would have conquered you at laſt.

Wid. Indeed I can't tell what he might have done, if he had lived.

Yo. Si. Well, but to the jewel: What ſaid you to him?

Wid. I ſtood up and thanked him with a kind of ceremony, but told him, I wiſhed it had been rather in any other form. Why, my dear, ſays he, ſhould not the two moſt valuable forms in the world be placed together? I told him, that as he placed a religious value upon it, he ſhould have it rather in another place. He told me, my breaſt ſhould be his altar; and ſo he might adore with a double delight. I told him, I thought he was a little profane; and ſince I did not place the ſame value upon it, or make the ſame uſe of it as he did, I might give him offence by mere neceſſity, and make that difference which we had both avoided with ſo much care, break in upon us in a caſe not to be reſiſted. He

anſwered, No, my dear, I am not going to bribe your principles, much leſs force them: put you what value you think fit upon it, and give me the ſame liberty. I told him, I hoped I ſhould not undervalue it as his preſent, if he did not overvalue it upon another account. He returned warmly, My dear, the laſt is impoſſible; and for the firſt, it is a trifle; give it but leave to hang where I have placed it, that is all the reſpect I aſk you to ſhow it on my account.

Yo. Si. Well, that was a favour you would not deny, if a ſtranger had given it you.

Wid. Dear ſiſter, you are a ſtranger to the caſe; if you had ſeen what was the conſequence of it, you would have been frighted, or perhaps have fallen quite out with him.

Yo. Si. I cannot imagine what conſequences you mean.

Wid. Why, firſt of all, he told me, that now he would be perfectly eaſy about my ſalvation, and would ceaſe to purſue me with arguments or entreaties in religious matters.

Yo. Si. What could he mean by that?

Wid. Why, he ſaid, he was ſure that bleſſed form that hung ſo near my heart, would have a miraculous influence ſome time or other, and I ſhould be brought home into the boſom of the Catholic Church.

Yo. Si. Well, I ſhould have ventured all that, and have ſlighted the very thoughts of it.

Wid. You cannot imagine what ſtreſs he laid on it; now, he ſaid, every good Catholic that ſaw me but paſs by them, would pray for me; and every one in particular would exorciſe me by the paſſion of Chriſt out of the chains of hereſy.

Yo. Si. What ſaid you to him?

Wid. I put it off with a ſmile, but my heart was

full. I ſcarce knew how to hold; and he perceived it eaſily, and broke off the talk a little; but he fell to it again, till he ſaw the tears ſtood in my eyes, when he took me in his arms, and kiſſed me again; kiſſed my neck where the croſs hung, and then kiſſed the jewel, repeating the word *Jeſu* two or three times, and left me.

Eld. Si. This was all ſuperſtition, ſiſter, I ſhould not have borne it; I would have thrown the jewel in his face, or on the ground, and have ſet my foot on it.

Wid. No, ſiſter, you would not have done ſo, I am ſure; neither was it my buſineſs to do ſo: my buſineſs was not to quarrel with my huſband about his religion, which it was now too late to help, but to keep him from being uneaſy about mine.

Eld. Si. I ſhould not have had ſo much patience; I would not have lived with him; I do not think it had been my duty.

Wid. Nay, ſiſter, that's expreſsly contrary to the ſcripture, where this very caſe is ſtated in the plaineſt manner imaginable: *The woman that hath a huſband which believeth not, if he will dwell with her, let her not leave him*, 1 Cor. vii. 13.

Eld. Si. That's true indeed; I ſpoke raſhly, ſiſter, in that; but it was a caſe, I confeſs, I do not know what I ſhould have done in it; I would not have bore it then.

Wid. That had been very diſobliging.

Eld. Si. I would have obliged him to have forborne his little idolatrous tricks then, and uſed them on other occaſions.

Wid. That had been to deſire him not to be a Roman Catholic: Why, in foreign countries, that are Popiſh, as I underſtand, they never go by a croſs, whether it be on the road, or on any building, but they pull off their hats.

Fa. So they do, my dear, and often kneel down, tho' it be in the dirt, and ſay over their prayers.

Wid. It is impoſſible to tell you how many attacks I had of that kind when I wore this jewel.

Fa. I do not doubt of it; eſpecially if he brought any ſtrangers into the room. How did you do, child, when the Venetian ambaſſador dined at your houſe? had you it on then?

Wid. Yes, Sir, my ſpouſe deſired me to put it on, and I could not well deny him: but I did not know how to behave; for the ambaſſador and all his retinue paid ſo many bows and homages to me, or to the croſs, that I ſcarce knew what to do with myſelf, nor was I able to diſtinguiſh their good manners from their religion; and it was well I did not then underſtand Italian; for, as my dear told me afterwards, they ſaid a great many religious things that would have given me offence.

Fa. Thoſe things are ſo frequent in Italy, that the Proteſtant ladies take no notice of them, and yet they all wear croſſes, but ſometimes put them out of ſight.

Wid. I did ſo afterwards; I lengthened the ſtring it hung to, that it might hang a little lower; but it was too big, if it went within my ſtays, it would hurt me: nor was it much odds to him; for if he ſaw the ſtring, he knew the croſs was there, and it was all one.

Yo. Si. Did he uſe any ceremony to it after the firſt time?

Wid. Always when he firſt came into any room where I was, he was ſure to give me his knee with his bow, and kiſs the croſs as well as his wife.

Eld. Si. I ſhould never have borne it.

Wid. You could never have reſiſted it, any more than I; for I did what I could, but his anſwer was clear; my dear, ſays he, take no notice of me, let

my civilities be to you; take them all to yourſelf, I cannot ſhow you too much reſpect; believe it is all your own, and be eaſy with me.

Eld. Si. How could he bid you believe, what you knew to be otherwiſe? Why did you not leave it off, and reproach him with the difference?

Wid. Dear ſiſter, I did ſo for months together: but then he doubled his ceremonies, and told me, I only mortified him then by obliging him to reverence the place where once the bleſſed figure had been lodged, as the holy pilgrims worſhipped the ſepulchre.

Eld. Si. He was too hard for you every way, ſiſter.

Wid. Ay, and would have been too hard for you too, if you had had him.

Eld. Si. It is my mercy that I had him not.

Wid. Well, it was my mercy too, that as I had him, I had leſs inconvenience with the unhappy circumſtance, than I muſt have had perhaps with any other man of his principles in the world.

Eld. Si. That's true; only this I muſt add, *viz.* that thoſe engaging ways would certainly, firſt or laſt, have brought you to Popery.

Wid. I hope not, ſiſter; but I cannot ſay, when I ſeriouſly reflect on it, how far I might have been left.

Fa. My dear, let me aſk you a queſtion or two about that: I know the firſt method they take in ſuch caſes, is to ſet you ſee that you have been miſtaken in your notions about Popery; that the difference is not ſo great as has been ſuggeſted to you; that we are all Chriſtians, that we worſhip the ſame God, believe the ſame creed, expect eternal life by the merits of the ſame Saviour, and the like; and by this method they bring us at firſt not to have

ſuch frightful ideas of the Roman Catholic religion as we had before.

Wid. That is true; and this I had frequently in diſcourſe; and, I confeſs, ſuch diſcourſe had ſome effect on me.

Yo. Si. It leſſened the averſion you had to them, no doubt.

Wid. It is true they became not ſo frightful to me as before; but they had another argument which my dear often uſed to me, and it was this: My dear, ſays he, all your own divines, and all that have written on theſe ſubjects, own, that a Papiſt, as you call us, may be ſaved; that it is poſſible for us to go to heaven. Our church have no room to believe ſo of the Proteſtants: why, if you may go to heaven among us, ſhould you not join with us?

Eld. Si. I know not what anſwer I ſhould have given to that.

Wid. I know not what your anſwer would have been, but I'll tell you what mine was; I told him, I did not know but it might be ſo; and I was willing to have as much charity as I had affection for him: but as for myſelf, I was ſure I could not go to heaven that way, becauſe I muſt act againſt my own light.

Yo. Si. That was the true anſwer indeed: what could he ſay to it?

Wid. Then he told me that he would pray for me that I might be farther enlightened; and he did not doubt but to prevail: I thanked him, and told him, I would do the ſame for him; and that tho' perhaps it might not be with ſo ſtrong a faith, I was ſure it would be with as earneſt a deſire.

Yo. Si. Well, you ſtood your ground nobly, ſiſter; but 'tis a mercy to you, that your perſeverance was tried no farther; 'tis a dreadful thing to have ſo dangerous an enemy ſo near one.

Wid. It is true, there lay my danger; for I muſt own, words ſpoken with ſo much tenderneſs have a ſingular effect, and ſink deeper on the mind than others, eſpecially where the affection is ſo mutual as it was with us.

Eld. Si. Why, ſiſter, do you think in time his tenderneſs, and his affectionate way of treating you, would not have abated?

Wid. I often feared it, but indeed I never found it; ſometimes I ſuggeſted it to him, that I feared it; and one day I told him, that if I did not turn, I was afraid he would. He gueſſed what I meant, but would have me explain myſelf: Why, my dear, ſays I, when I reflect what your thoughts are about Proteſtants, That they are out of the pale of the church, and in a condition that they cannot be ſaved, I cannot but apprehend, that if I do not come over to your opinion, your love to me will abate, and at laſt turn into a ſtated averſion and hatred! how can you love an object which you think God hates? My dear, ſays he, taking me very affectionately in his arms, I will prevent all your fears, by telling you, that, were what you mention poſſible, it could not be till I utterly deſpaired of your ever being brought over to the church; and I ſhall never be brought to believe, but God will open your eyes firſt or laſt; and, beſides, my earneſt deſire to perſuade you, and win you to embrace the true religion, will teach me to do it by all the tenderneſs and love that it is poſſible for me to ſhew you; for to be unkind to you would be the way to drive you farther off: but, be it as it will, I can never abate my affection to you; and my dear, ſays he, (with the moſt obliging paſſionate air of concern, that it was poſſible to ſhew,) I hope that to love you tenderly and violently, is not the way to keep you at a diſtance from the church, but rather to draw you, to engage

you, and let you ſee, that peace, love, joy, charity, and all the virtues of a Chriſtian, are to be found among us, and not that we are furies and tyrants, as we have been repreſented. And when he had ſaid this, holding me ſtill in his arms, he kiſſed me ſeveral times, and went on; My dear, ſays he, let God alone change your heart his own way; I'll never take any method, but that of loving you ſincerely and moſt paſſionately while I live, and praying for you even after I am in heaven. While he ſaid this, I ſaw ſuch an inexpreſſible tenderneſs in his countenance, and every word came from him with ſuch paſſion, that I could not hold from tears: but he had not done with me yet; for, while he held me in one arm, he put his other in his pocket, and taking out his pocket-book, he bid me open it, and there dropt out a looſe paper doubled pretty thick, which I took up, and went to put it in again. Take that paper, my dear, ſays he, and put it up: you ſhall have a pledge for the continuance of my affection to you, whether you change your opinion or no. I opened it, but could read very little of it, for I had but newly begun to learn Italian. What is it, my dear? ſaid I. It is, ſaid he, an aſſignment on the bank of Genoa for two thouſand ducats a year, and it ſhall be made over to your father in truſt for you, and to whoever you will beſtow it after you.

Eld. Si. Well, Siſter, I would never tell this ſtory to any Proteſtant lady, that was in the leaſt danger of marrying a Roman.

Fa. Why, child, if her ſtory be told with it, I think it may be told to advantage.

Eld. Si. It may teach them indeed to pray, Lead us not into temptation. Well, ſiſter, I muſt repeat what I have ſaid before to you, though it does grieve you; 'tis your great mercy that he is dead.

Wid. O do not ſpeak ſuch a word, ſiſter, it wounds my very ſoul.

Eld. Si. Pray anſwer me this ſhort queſtion then; Would you marry ſuch another papiſt?

Wid. There's not ſuch another upon earth, ſiſter; and beſides, how can you name the word? that's the unkindeſt thing you could think of; I muſt break off the diſcourſe.

Eld. Si. Do not call it unkind; I do not mean it the way you take it: Suppoſe things at the remoteſt diſtance you can, or ſuppoſe it to be any other body's caſe, would you adviſe any other perſon that had ſuch an offer, I ſay, would you adviſe them to marry ſuch another?

Wid. No, Siſter, not to be a princeſs.

Eld. Si. I am anſwered; and I muſt own, I ſhould take them for diſtracted if they did.

Wid. Unleſs the lady reſolved to turn Papiſt; and if that, ſhe would do beſt to do it beforehand, openly and avowedly, that ſhe might not be under the reflection of doing it on a worſe account, *viz.* by compulſion.

Yo. Si. But after you have ſaid ſo many things of him, that are enough to recommend him, not to the affection, but even to the admiration of any one, what can you ſay to perſuade any young woman not to think that you were very happy in him, and that conſequently they would be ſo with ſuch another?

Wid. O ſiſter! do not ſuggeſt that I was happy with him; I had as few happy hours, as it was poſſible for any one to have, that ever had a good huſband.

Yo. Si. How can you convince any one of that?

Wid. Why, ſiſter, it is plain to any one that knows wherein the happineſs of life conſiſts. It is true, I wanted nothing; I lived in the abundance of all things; I had the beſt humoured huſband on earth, and one that loved me to an extreme; which, had

not our caſe indeed called for ſo much affection another way, would have been a ſin; for, in a word, he ſummed up all his earthly felicity in his wife.

Eld. Si. If you were to give that account to the gentlemen of this age, they would ſay you were writing the character of a fool.

Wid. It is no matter for that; it was his mercy and mine too; for if it had been otherwiſe, we had been the miſerableſt creatures alive; it was bad enough as it was; and all that knew him, will grant that he was no fool.

Yo. Si. But what do you think then would have been the conſequence, if, as you ſay, he had loved you leſs? Wherein muſt you have been miſerable?

Wid. Why, ſiſter, if his abundant affection had not cloſed every debate with kindneſs, whither muſt we have run? if he had not checked all the forwardneſs of his religious zeal for converting me, by his love to me, to what ſeverity in our mutual reproaches would we have gone on! in a word, ſiſter, I muſt have turned, or been turned out of doors; I muſt have been a Papiſt, or we muſt have parted.

Yo. Si. Why, ſiſter, you know there's Mr P—— and his wife are in the very ſame caſe, and yet they agree well enough.

Wid. Dear ſiſter, how can you name them! he is a Papiſt, and ſhe is a Proteſtant; and when the name is taken away, it is hard to tell whether either of them have any religion or no, nor do they care one farthing which way either goes: People that can live eaſy without religion, may live eaſy without any religion: that is not the caſe we are ſpeaking of.

Eld. Si. There is a difference there, I confeſs.

Wid. But if, ſiſter, a religious life be the only heaven upon earth, as we have been taught to believe,

tell me, if you repreſent ſuch a caſe to yourſelf, what muſt it be for two to live together, who place their happineſs really in ſuch a life as we call religious, but differ ſo extremely about what religion to build it upon; that agree in the general, but not in the particulars: that aim mutually at the end, *viz.* going to Heaven, but turn back to back as to the way thither? Can a religious life be formed between ſuch as theſe! and if not, then they are mutually deprived of that heaven upon earth, which, as you and I agree, is alone to be found in a religious life.

Eld. Si. That is true; but then in ſuch a caſe the enjoyment muſt be reſerved and ſingular, and a woman muſt keep her religion to herſelf.

Wid. But you will allow her then to be deprived at once of all ſocial religion, of all family religion, and by conſequence of all the comfort of a religious huſband.

Eld. Si. Nay, that is true, and I am not ſpeaking for it; but aſking your experience, whether with ſo tender a huſband as you had, it might not be otherwiſe?

Wid. Dear ſiſter, his tenderneſs, as I ſaid before, was my great mercy, as it made him bear with my obſtinacy, as he called it: had he had the ſame tenderneſs, and been indifferent in his principles, I might have turned him; but had he wanted that tenderneſs, and yet been as zealous in his religion as he was, he muſt have turned me, or I muſt have lived a dreadful life with him.

Yo. Si. I find he was a mighty religious man in his way.

Wid. To the greateſt degree imaginable devout, and very ſerious, I aſſure you.

Yo. Si. Well, though he was miſtaken in his principles, yet he was the more ſober, the more honeſt, and every way the better prepared to be a good man.

Wid. His devotion made him, without doubt, the better man: but if it had not been for the reſtraints of his affection, it had certainly made him the worſe huſband.

Yo. Si. So that in this queſtion of marrying a man of a different opinion in religion, you ſuppoſe, that the more devout and ſerious the perſon is in his way, the worſe huſband.

Wid. Without queſtion it is ſo: the zeal in their own opinions makes them always uneaſy and impatient with their wives, teizing and baiting them with impertinent diſputes, and even driving them by force of reſtleſs importunities (which, by the way, is the worſt ſort of perſecution) into a compliance.

Yo. Si. I agree with you in that part: But, ſiſter, you ſay, that even when your huſband's love was your protection from theſe importunities, you were yet unhappy, and could not be able to lead a religious life.

Wid. No, ſiſter, I did not ſay ſo; I ſaid we could not have a religious family; all ſocial religion was loſt; mutual help and aſſiſtance in religion was wanting; public worſhipping God in the family as a houſe, could not be ſet up; education and inſtruction of children was all deſtroyed; example to ſervants and inferiors all ſpoiled; nothing could be of religion, but what was merely perſonal and retired.

Aunt. There indeed you are right, niece.

Wid. I aſſure you, Madam, from my experience, that next to the having the huſband and wife be religious, or at leaſt religiouſly inclined, they that would have a religious family, ſhould take as much care as poſſible to have religious ſervants.

Aunt. I agree with you in that, my dear, with all my heart.

Wid. It is impoſſible to preſerve the neceſſary rules

of a religious family without it, or to have a due regard ſhewn to the orders which muſt be given on that account.

Aunt. Nay, child, I go farther than that; I inſiſt, that our ſervants ought to be ſo choſen, as to be of the ſame opinions too in religion as ourſelves.

Wid. I have not ſo much conſidered that part indeed; but I believe, Madam, the reaſons for it are very good.

Aunt. I have a great deal to ſay to that from my own experience.

Eld. Si. And ſo have I too, Madam, from what I have ſeen in ſome families of my acquaintance.

Wid. I have ſeen enough of it in my little family, to make me reſolve, that while I have a family, and can keep any ſervants, I will entertain none but ſuch as worſhip God the ſame way as I worſhip him.

Eld. Si. And did ſo before you took them; I hope you mean ſo, ſiſter.

Wid. Yes, indeed, I do mean ſo too.

Aunt. I muſt put in an exception, niece, there, in behalf of poor ignorant creatures, that may come into a family, untaught, and are willing to be inſtructed in things that are good.

Wid. I know not what to ſay to that part, becauſe I am but ill qualified for a ſchoolmiſtreſs.

Aunt. Well, we will diſcourſe of this by itſelf, niece, for I have a great deal to ſay upon that ſubject.

Wid. With all my heart, Madam.

Aunt. But in the mean time, child, let us go on now where we left off.

Wid. There was as much religion in our houſe, as it was poſſible there ſhould be, in our circumſtances; for both of us deſired it in general, and purſued it

in particular, only we could not join in the manner; and it was a perfect ſcene of confuſion, to ſee how religion was carried on among us; the ſervants were ſome Papiſts, ſome Proteſtants, ſome Pagans; for we had three Eaſt Indian blacks and one negro among our people. The Chriſtian ſervants were every now and then together by the ears, about perſuading the negro to turn Chriſtian, and be baptized, but could not bear to think what ſort of Chriſtian the poor creature ſhould be; one of our men, an Italian, would have him be a Papiſt, and the other would have him to be a Proteſtant; and the poor negro was ſo confounded between them, that he could not tell what to do. The negro was a ſenſible inquiſitive fellow, and had, by mere aſking queſtions on both ſides, gotten a great deal of knowledge of religion; but was merely ſtopt in his ſearch after farther particulars by the impertinent quarrels of thoſe ſervants who pretended to inſtruct him: both told him he muſt believe a God, a future ſtate, a heaven, a hell, a reſurrection to life or to death, and that he muſt be ſaved by a Redeemer. They agreed exactly in their deſcription of the joys of eternal life, the torments of hell, and particularly they had joined in giving the poor negro a frightful apprehenſion of hell, as the reward of his doing wickedly, and of the devil as a tempter, an enemy, and tormentor; ſo that the poor fellow would pray to God very heartily to ſave him from hell, and to keep him from the devil.

But when thoſe poor ignorant fellows began to inſtruct him how to worſhip God, and who to look to as his Redeemer and Saviour; to talk to him about reading the ſcriptures, and ſuch things, they fell out to the laſt degree; the Engliſh footman told the Italian he was an idolater, and that was worſe than a heathen: that Negum (for ſo the poor negro

was called) was as good a Chriſtian as he; for tho' he did not worſhip in the name of Chriſt, yet as he (the Italian footman) worſhipped a piece of wood for a ſaviour, Chriſt would not accept him; and it was as bad as Negum's worſhipping a hobgoblin, or any thing elſe. The Italian told him he was a heretic, and his religion was no religion at all; that he was an enemy to God, and to the church; and told Negum, that if he believed what that fellow ſaid, the devil would take him away alive. They had many quarrels about it: but one day above the reſt they came to that height, that they fell to fighting: It ſeems the reſt of the ſervants had parted them before their maſter or I heard of it; but as we were both walking together in the evening in our garden, we, by mere chance, ſaw the negro in the kitchen garden crying: his maſter ſaw him firſt, and called him to us; and the fellow came with a book in his hand, but terribly afraid his maſter ſhould be angry.

What is the matter, Negum? ſays his maſter; and ſo they began to talk.

Neg. No muchè matter, no muchè.

Ma. Why, you were crying, Negum: what did you cry about? has any body beat you?

Neg. No muchè cry, no beatè me.

Ma. What then, Negum? What book have you got there?

Neg. Indeedè me no go away, [kneels down.] Sir; me no go, me be a Chriſtian, no indeedè.

[The fellow, it ſeems, was afraid his maſter would think, if he turned Chriſtian, he would be baptized, and ſo think himſelf free; and he kneeled down to his maſter to beg him not to be angry.]

Ma. Well, well, thou ſhalt be a Chriſtian, Ne-

gum, if thou haſt a mind to it; God forbid any body ſhould hinder thee: What book is that?

Neg. Bible-book; me readé this book to be Chriſtian.

Ma. Who gave you that book to read?

Neg. Auguſtino.

Ma. Let me ſee it. [He looked in the book, and ſaw it was an Italian miſſal or pſalter.]

Neg. Me have other Bible-book [He pulls another book out] too.

Ma. Let's ſee that too. [His maſter looked in that too, and found it was an Engliſh bible.] Who gave you this too?

Neg. William.

Ma. Well, you underſtand the languages; read them both: but, poor fellow, thou haſt got but two ſorry teachers.

[When he gave the book back to him, and bid him read them both, he turned to me; My dear, ſays he, theſe fellows pretend to inſtruct this poor negro in the Chriſtian religion, when they cannot agree about it themſelves, I am ſure. Upon which Negum makes his maſter a bow, and puts in his word.]

Neg. No, indeedè, they no agree; they fightè juſt now about teachè me.

Ma. What, did they fight?

Neg. Yes, indeedè they fightè juſt now; they no teachè me; one ſay, me go to the devil; the other ſay, me go to the devil; they no teachè me to go away from the devil; they make me no know what I do.

Ma. And was that it you cried about, Negum?

Neg. Yes, indeedè, me cry no to go to the devil; me would go away from the devil.

Ma. You muſt pray to God to keep you from the devil.

Neg. Yes, indeedè, me do pray God keep away the devil.

Ma. You muſt pray to God to teach you too.

Neg. God teachè me! No, Auguſtino teachè me! No, William teachè me! God teachè, how that?

[Here my ſpouſe found how the caſe ſtood, and turning to me, My dear, ſaid he, theſe fellows quarrel continually about this poor man, and ſo in the end he will be brought rather to abhor the Chriſtian religion in general, than to turn Chriſtian at all; while one pulls him one way, and one another: now what courſe muſt you and I take? I cannot pretend to deſire him to be made a Proteſtant; I am ſure you won't deſire him to be a Catholic; and ſo the poor fellow muſt be loſt. I told him, it was a critical caſe, in which I knew not how to act; but as they were his ſervants in particular, and that he brought this negro out of Italy with him, I thought they were to be at his diſpoſal and direction, rather than mine. My dear, ſays he, there is nothing mine but what is yours; do not ſhift it off ſo, but tell me what ſhall I do? I confeſs I trembled when he ſaid ſo; for I was afraid ſome debate would fall in between us, in conſequence of the caſe; however, I anſwered him thus: My dear, you determined before me, what you might be ſure would be my thoughts; but what can I determine about your ſervants? Well, my dear, ſays he, I will do as Solomon did in the caſe of dividing the child, I will ſhew you that I am the trueſt lover of his ſoul, I mean of us two; for rather than he ſhould not be taught to worſhip God at all, let him be taught the way of the country where we are; if we divide as our two men have done, he will not be taught at all.

Upon this principle he acted, and conſented I ſhould act in it as I ſaw cauſe; upon which I ſent

the negro down to a country-tenant in Eſſex, upon pretence to learn to plough and ſow, and do country-work, and there I kept him near a twelvemonth; at the ſame time the farmer being a very ſober religious man, and having a hint from me what to do, this poor negro is become a very ſenſible religious fellow, has been baptized now two years ago, and I think verily is an excellent Chriſtian.]

Si. And did he run away, or claim his freedom upon his being baptized?

Wid. No, not he; but I gave him his freedom when his maſter died, and gave him wages, and he is an extraordinary ſervant, I aſſure you.

Si. Your huſband ſtrained a point of religion there, I aſſure you.

Wid. Why, you ſee what principle he did it from; he ſaw the fellow was in a Proteſtant country, and would either be a Proteſtant at laſt, or nothing at all; and he rather choſe that he ſhould be a Proteſtant than remain a heathen, or loſe all deſire of being a Chriſtian; for, ſays he, God can enlighten him farther by a miracle, when he pleaſes; and having been taught the general notions of religion, he would be the eaſier brought to embrace the true church; but if he continues a heathen, he will have no knowledge at all.

Eld. Si. I believe you would not have ſhewn the ſame charity for his church.

Wid. I confeſs I did not ſhew ſo much zeal for the ſoul of the poor negro, as I think I ought to have done, or ſo much charity as he did; but had other thoughts at that time to take me up: however, ſiſter, to bring this back to the firſt diſcourſe, you ſee by this how fatal, in a family, difference in principles is within the ſame houſe; and had he not been biaſſed by an extraordinary temper, as well as by an

uncommon charity, we had been the moſt miſerable couple on earth: ſo that, in ſhort, there is not one part of a woman's life, in ſuch a circumſtance, that is not dreadfully embarraſſed, if ſhe has any ſenſe of her own principles, or her huſband any of his.

Yo. Si. But do you think then, that there may be a caſe of ſome kind or other, in which a man and a woman may be happy together, though there be a difference in opinion?

Wid. No, indeed, I do not think there is: I do not think you can name a caſe, in which it is poſſible to ſay with truth, that they can be happy; that is, that there is not ſome interruption to their happineſs on that very account.

Yo. Si. That is ſuppoſing them to be both religiouſly inclined.

Wid. Nay, that need not be ſuppoſed; for we go upon our mother's principle, That without a religious family there can be no happineſs in life: if they are, as I ſaid before, indifferent about religion, then there is no happineſs at all, in our ſenſe of felicity; and if they place their happineſs in purſuing their duty, as every true Chriſtian muſt, there muſt be ſome of that happineſs wanting, where they cannot worſhip God together, and go hand in hand to heaven.

Yo. Si. You know, ſiſter, I was always of that mind; but I am exceedingly confirmed in it by your experience.

Wid. You were happy in your early cleaving to this principle, and I miſerable in neglecting it; may both our examples be directing to thoſe that come after us.

Fa. Come, children, bleſſed be God for the experience of both. Let us end this diſcourſe, for it makes me melancholy, that have had a very unhappy part in both your caſes: in yours, my dear,

[Speaking to the youngeſt.] I violently endeavoured to force you to be miſerable; and in yours, my dear, [Speaking to the other.], I entirely omitted the concern I ought to have had upon me, to prevent your making yourſelf ſo.

Si. Do not afflict yourſelf, Sir, about that now; bleſſed be God we have both got it over.

Fa. But it does afflict me for all that; and let all fathers learn from me, how much it concerns them, if they wiſh well to their children, either to their ſouls or bodies, to eſtabliſh religious families in their poſterity, and to prevent their children marrying, if poſſible, either where there is no religion, or no agreement in opinion about it: for in either caſe they are ſure to be made miſerable.

RELIGIOUS COURTSHIP.

THE APPENDIX.

PART III.

IN the latter part of the laſt diſcourſe we left the aunt and the widow ſiſter, who had married the Roman Catholic gentleman, entering upon a diſcourſe about the inconveniencies of entertaining irreligious ſervants; and alſo of entertaining of ſervants of different perſuaſions and opinions in religion, one from another, or of differing opinions from the family they ſerved in. The ladies put off the diſcouſe of that affair to another time, the aunt being willing to enter into a more particular converſation about it. This cauſed ſeveral very entertaining diſcourſes among them at ſeveral times; ſome of which, I hope, may be uſeful to be made public for the direction of other families, and for the encouragement of all maſters or miſtreſſes of families who deſire to promote good government and religious things among their children and ſervants; and particularly in ſuch a time as this, when it is known that ſervants are leſs apt to ſubmit to family regulations, and good houſehold government, than ever.

The two ladies being at their aunt's houſe, which was at Hampſtead, as I have obſerved, their aunt had a little ſquabble with one of her maids upon the following occaſion: The maid had, it ſeems, been out in the afternoon of a Sabbath-day, and ſtaid longer than the uſual time of being at church; and her

lady, who otherwiſe had known nothing of it, happened, unluckily for the wench, to be juſt in the way when ſhe came in; that is to ſay, the lady chancing to go down the backſtairs, which was not ordinary for her to do, meets her maid dreſſed in her beſt clothes, and juſt going up to undreſs herſelf; and this rencounter between the miſtreſs and the maid, produced the following dialogue.

DIALOGUE I.

Lady. HA! Mary, ſays the lady, not undreſſed yet?

Mary. I ſhall be ready preſently, Madam.

La. But how come you to be ſo fine at this time of day? I ſuppoſe you are but juſt come in, Mary?

Ma. Yes, Madam, I have been come in a good while.

La. What do you call a good while, Mary?

Ma. A great while, Madam?

La. Muſt I not know how long, Mary?

Ma. Yes, Madam, if you pleaſe; but you do not uſe to inquire into ſuch trifles; I hope I have not been wanted.

La. It would have been a trifle, Mary, if it had been of another day; but it being on the Sabbath-day, Mary, makes the caſe differ extremely; I hope you were at church, Mary?

Ma. Yes, Madam, to be ſure.

La. At our church, Mary? I think I did not ſee you there.

Ma. No, madam, indeed I was not there; I hope it is all one if I was at another church?

La. No, Mary, it is not all one, becauſe I cannot be ſure that you were at church at all.

Ma. You may take my word, Madam, for that, for once, I hope.

La. I cannot ſay, Mary, that it is ſo much to my ſatisfaction to take your word for it, as it would have been to ſee you at church myſelf.

Ma. I am ſorry, Madam, you ſhould be uneaſy at thoſe things; I hope I do your buſineſs to your content; and as to going to church, I hope I may be at liberty to go to what church I like beſt.

La. Why, yes, Mary, I am willing to allow liberty of conſcience, but then it is upon condition, that it is really a conſcientious liberty; it is not my queſtion, what church you go to, if Iam ſatisfied you were at church at all; but how ſhall I be ſure of that, Mary?

Ma. It is not worth your inquiry, Madam: thoſe things are trifles below a miſtreſs to trouble herſelf with.

La. No, Marry, you are much miſtaken there: I think I am obliged to inquire whether my ſervants go to church or no, and how they ſpend their time on Sabbath-days: beſides, Mary, it is a great while ſince church was done, and I find you are but juſt come home; I deſire to have ſome little account where you have been.

Ma. I am not aſhamed to tell where I have been, Madam; I have been doing no harm; I have been taking a walk, Madam; I work hard enough all the week, I think I may take a little pleaſure on Sundays.

La. Well, Mary, ſo you have been walking in the fields, and taking your pleaſure to-day?

Ma. Yes, Madam, I hope there is no offence in it; I think you ſaid I have not been wanted.

La. Well, but juſt now you ſaid you had been at church, Mary?

Ma. Why, that is true, Madam; I was at Highgate church-door, but I did not go in, that is true; I did not think you would have troubled yourſelf to examine ſuch trifles ſo very particularly.

La. You and I differ very much about the thing itſelf; I do not think it is a trifling thing at all, Mary, whether my ſervants ſpend the Sabbath day at church, or in taking their pleaſure.

Ma. I work very hard, Madam, all the week.

La. What is that to keeping the Sabbath-day, Mary?

Ma. Why, Madam, ſure I may take a little pleaſure on Sundays; I have no other time; I am ſure you give your ſervants no time for diverſion.

La Did I ever refuſe you, Mary, when you aſked me for a day for yourſelf?

Ma. I never trouble you much with aſking.

La. I had rather you had, Mary, than take God's time for yourſelf.

Ma. God's time, Madam! all our time is God's time, I think.

La. Yes, Mary, but ſome he has appointed for religion, Mary.

Ma. Religion! O dear! indeed, Madam, I do not trouble myſelf about religion, not I.

La. So I find, Mary, and am ſorry for it.

Ma. O Madam, you have religion enough for us all; what can I do?

La. Do not make a jeſt of it, Mary, I am not jeſting with you.

Ma. I think you are, Madam, when you talk to me of religion; I do not underſtand it; what can I ſay to it?

La. You can go to church, Mary, cannot you?

Ma. Yes, Madam, ſo I do ſometimes.

La. And do not you every Sunday?

Ma. No indeed, Madam, not I; it is a folly to lie.

La. I am ſorry for it, Mary; I aſſure you, they that live with me ſhall go to church every Sunday, or I ſhall not deſire their ſervice.

Ma. You never made that bargain, Madam, when you hired me.

La. Well, Mary, then I make it now; for they ſhall not ſerve me all the week, that make my work an excuſe for not ſerving God on Sunday; I ſhould think it would bring a curſe upon my work, and upon my whole family.

Ma. As you pleaſe for that, Madam.

La. No, Mary, it muſt be as you pleaſe, it ſeems; for you know my conditions now, and I expect you will obſerve them, or remove.

[Here her miſtreſs left her, ſeeing ſhe began to talk a little ſaucily, and ſhe had no mind to vex herſelf, or put herſelf in any paſſion with her.]

The wench, a little heated with the reproof her lady had given her, and vexed that ſhe was caught, for ſhe did not expect to ſee her miſtreſs on the back-ſtairs, went up and undreſſed herſelf, and hearing another of the maids in the next room, ſhe goes to her, and there gives a full vent to her paſſion; railing heartily at her miſtreſs, and at religion, and at every thing that came in her way. The following diſcourſe will give ſome part of their talk: She knocks at the door, and calls to her fellow-ſervant thus; Betty, open the door, I want to ſpeak to you. So Betty let her in, and ſhe begins:

Ma. I ſuppoſe you have heard what a lecture I have had, have not you, Betty?

Bet. No, not I: who have you had a lecture from?

Ma. Nay, no body but my miſtreſs: I wonder what buſineſs ſhe had upon the back-ſtairs.

Bet. Back-ſtairs! Why, did you meet my miſtreſs upon the back-ſtairs?

Ma. Ay, ay, I met her there; or rather, ſhe met me there, as ill luck would have it; for I was but juſt come in, and was coming up to undreſs me, but ſhe caught me; I would I had been a mile off.

Bet. Why, what did ſhe ſay to you? was ſhe angry?

Ma. Ay, ay, angry! I never had ſuch a rattle from her ſince I came into the houſe.

Bet. What was the matter? what was it for?

Ma. For! for nothing, I think; but forſooth ſhe would needs know where I had been, and whether I had been at church or no: What has ſhe to do with it, whether I go to church or no? it is nothing to her.

Bet. O that was only becauſe you was but juſt come in, and it was ſo long paſt church-time, I ſuppoſe, that made her ſuſpect you.

Ma. Suſpect me! What do you mean by that? I do nothing to be ſuſpected, not I.

Bet. I do not ſay you do; I ſay that made her ſuſpect you had not been at church.

Ma. Well, ſhe need not trouble her head with her ſuſpicions of me; I told her I had not been at church; I told her I had been to take a walk with a friend as far as Highgate.

Bet. Did you? that is more than I dare do; if I make a ſlip now and then, I am in ſuch a hurry to get back juſt as church is done, that it takes away the pleaſure of it.

Ma. I do not trouble my head with it; if I have a mind to take a walk, as long as ſhe do not want me, what need ſhe trouble herſelf? I ſhall not be ſo much afraid of her, not I; as long as it is only on Sunday, and my work is done too.

Bet. But then I can aſſure you my miſtreſs and you will not agree long together; for if ſhe knows it, ſhe will not keep you an hour.

Ma. Nay, ſhe may do as ſhe will for that; I told her plainly where I went, and that I thought ſhe had nothing to do with it.

Bet. Did you ſo, Mary? Then I ſuppoſe ſhe told you her mind.

Ma. Ay, ay, and I told her my mind too; I will not be tied up to her religious trumpery, not I; if I do her work, what has ſhe to do with what religion I am of, or whether I have any religion or no? it is no buſineſs of hers.

Bet. No, Mary, I cannot go that length neither; I think my miſtreſs may concern herſelf with that; for if ſhe is religious herſelf, ſhe may deſire to have her ſervants be ſo too; and therefore if I do make a breach ſometimes, I always do it ſo as not to be found out; and I have had ſuch good luck, that my miſtreſs has never caught me yet.

Ma. Well, ſhe has caught me; and if it be a fine day next Sunday, ſhe ſhall catch me again, if ſhe has a mind to it; I won't be ty'd to go to church but when I pleaſe; I love liberty: Beſides, this is about religion, Betty, and ſo 'tis liberty of conſcience; you know I love liberty of conſcience, Betty.

Bet. You are witty upon it, Mary: pray what do you call liberty of conſcience?

Ma. What! That I ſhould have liberty to go to church or not to go to church, as I think fit, and when I pleaſe; is not that liberty of conſcience?

Bet. No, Mary, I think that is liberty without conſcience; for 'tis a liberty in what we ſhould not do; that can never be liberty of conſcience, Mary.

Ma. Well, well: then let it be liberty without conſcience; 'tis the liberty I love; and I ſee no harm in it: Why, you acknowledge you do ſo yourſelf, don't you?

Bet. That's true, ſo I do ſometimes; but I cannot ſay 'tis as it ſhould be; I cannot ſay as you do, that there is no harm in it; 'tis a fault, I know that; and I don't do it very often; and when I do, as I told you, I take care not to have it known.

Ma. Very well, then you are worſe than I; for you believe it is a fault, and yet you do it: Now I

don't think it is a fault at all; if I did, it may be I would not do it.

Bet. I don't believe you can ſay with a ſafe conſcience, that there is no harm in it; you only are hardened a little more than I.

Ma. It may be ſo; and you are even with me; for you are a little more of a hypocrite than I, and, for aught I ſee, that's all the difference between us.

Bet. Truly, Mary, your reproof is bitter; but perhaps it is too true; and I ſhall learn ſo much from you, that I ſhall take more care how I do again what my own conſcience convinces me is a fault.

Ma. Well, and I may go on, becauſe I have more impudence than you; I ſuppoſe that's what you mean.

Bet. I do not ſay ſo; I believe you know 'tis a fault as well as I do, but you are a little more uſed to thoſe things, it may be, than I have been.

Ma. I am as I was bred, and ſo, it may be, are you; I was never taught to lay much ſtreſs upon theſe things, and ſo I never trouble myſelf about them.

Bet. Well, Mary, I am glad you think I have been taught better.

Ma. Why, as well as you have been taught, I find you can take a walk in the fields on Sunday as well as I.

Bet. But I tell you again, I don't do it, and think there's no harm in it, as you do; and I think you have touched me ſo home with your reproof, that I reſolve never to do ſo again while I live.

Ma. But what's all this to my miſtreſs and me? What has ſhe to do with it?

Bet. Why, Mary, my miſtreſs is a very pious religious lady, and ſhe thinks herſelf bound to call her ſervants to an account how they ſpend their time.

Ma. Ay, ſo ſhe may for all the week days, for that's her time; but Sunday is my own, ſhe has nothing to do with that.

Bet. I aſſure you my miſtreſs will not allow that doctrine; ſhe thinks ſhe has as much to do with you on Sunday as any other day.

Ma. You talk of my miſtreſs being a religious lady: why, ſo ſhe may be, for aught I know; and I think we have ſo much religion at home, we need not go abroad for it: Does not the chaplain teaze us twice a-day with his long prayers, and reading of chapters? I am ſure he has made me neglect my buſineſs many times to come in to prayers; but I give them the ſlip ſometimes; and if I did not, they would have many a good diſh of meat ſpoiled, ſo they would.

Bet. You are a merry girl, Mary, when you talk of religion.

Ma. Nay, I don't underſtand it; I know nothing of the matter; I come to do my buſineſs and mind the kitchen; if their dinners are not well diſhed up, they may find fault, and I ſhould take ſome care to mend it; but to talk to me about religion, 'tis time enough hereafter, let them let me alone to myſelf.

Bet. But my miſtreſs will ſatisfy you, that ſhe is obliged, while ſhe keeps you for a ſervant, to ſee that you ſerve God as well as you ſerve her.

Ma. O dear! let them ſerve God themſelves better firſt; I don't ſee that any of them have any more regard to their prayers and their chapters than I have that ſtay away, but only for form-ſake, and it may be for the credit of employing a chaplain.

Bet. Nay, do not ſay ſo neither; I can aſſure you my miſtreſs is a very pious religious lady, and you cannot ſay otherwiſe, I am ſure; and ſo are all the young ladies too, they are like her.

Ma. It may be ſo; and yet I have ſeen them all

aſleep at prayers many a time, when I am ſure they had not ſo much more need to be ſleepy than I had, that work hard, nor ſo much neither.

Bet. Sometimes they may be heavy, but that is not often; and I ſuppoſe you cannot ſay they were ever all aſleep together.

Ma. 'Tis no matter for that, they do the ſame at church; and pray what is the difference between my going into the fields to take my pleaſure on Sundays, and their going to church to take their eaſe? between my waſhing my diſhes, while the chaplain is at prayers, and their being faſt aſleep at prayers?

Bet. Why, Moll, thou art very malicious to take notice of ſuch things, and they are faults to be ſure; but there is a vaſt difference in them too.

Ma. As how, pray?

Bet. Why, thus: That though they may ſometimes drop aſleep, 'tis not always, and they do it but ſeldom. You, it ſeems, make the other a practice, and do it always: then if they do ſleep ſometimes at church or at prayers, they don't pretend to ſay there is no harm in it, they muſt acknowledge they ought not to do ſo: but you have the impudence to ſay, when you ſpend your time in the fields or perhaps worſe, there is no harm in it. Now, there's a great deal of difference between doing a thing which they acknowledge to be wrong, and doing what is really wrong, and juſtifying it as if it was right.

Ma. Well, let them do what they will, and let me do what I will; I don't meddle with them, let them let me alone, can't they?

Bet. But it may be, my miſtreſs thinks ſhe ought to govern her ſervants in religious things, as well as in her houſe-affairs.

Ma. Why, let her think what ſhe will, and do what ſhe will, I will have my own way, I ſhall mind nothing they ſay to me,

Bet. That's none of my buſineſs, Mary; you muſt do as you will.

Ma. No; and 'tis none of her buſineſs neither, I think.

Bet. I can't ſay that, Mary; I think, if you were a miſtreſs, and kept a great many ſervants, as our miſtreſs does, you would talk otherwiſe, and do otherwiſe too, or elſe you would ſoon have a houſe full of whores and rogues.

Ma. I don't know what I would do then, nor do I trouble my head with it; for I am never like to be tried with it: but if I was a houſe-keeper, and kept maids, I would take care they ſhould do my buſineſs, and that would keep them from making ſuch a diſorderly houſe as you ſpeak of; as for their religion, I ſhould not trouble myſelf about it.

Bet. Well, but I would trouble myſelf about that too, I aſſure you, if I were a miſtreſs.

Ma. Why, what would you do?

Bet. Why, if I had a chaplain or a huſband that kept up good orders in his houſe, I would take care my ſervants ſhould always attend at prayers; and on Sunday I would take care they ſhould all go to church, and come home again too when church was done.

Ma. You would! And if I was your maid, you would make me come in to prayers every night and morning, would you?

Bet. Yes, I would, or you ſhould not live with me.

Ma. Well, and if I did come in, I ſhould only laugh at you all when I did, and make a jeſt of your chaplain or your huſband, and ſo would other ſervants too: don't you ſee we do ſo here? an't we always making a ſport of that poor dull thing called a chaplain?

Bet. Yes, I can't ſay but I ſee it, but I never join

with you in it; for I think there's no jeſt at all in it: And as for the poor good man himſelf, I know he ſees it, and 'tis a great trouble and diſcouragement to him.

Ma. Why, what is ſuch a fellow good for, but to be gamed and made ſport with? does he think we take him for any thing but a religious Merry-Andrew?

Bet. You muſt think, however, my miſtreſs takes him otherwiſe, and thinks it her duty to keep him, and to have good orders in her houſe; and it does not become us that are ſervants to mock at ſuch things: No maſter or miſtreſs that knew their ſervants mocked at God's worſhip in their houſe, ought to keep thoſe ſervants an hour longer in their families.

Ma. And you would make me come to church, if I was your cook, would you, Betty?

Bet. No, I don't ſay I would make you go to church; but you ſhould either go to God's worſhip, or go about your buſineſs.

Ma. Well, but what if I were a Diſſenter, and did not like your way, or did not care to go to your church? Or what if you were a Diſſenter, and I did not like to go to the meeting-houſe?

Bet. Why, truly, Mary, in general, I ſay if that were the real caſe I would not conſtrain you, provided I was ſatisfied you went but ſomewhere; but your diſpute with my miſtreſs is between going ſomewhere and nowhere; not between ſerving God in this manner or that manner, but between ſerving God ſome way or other, and ſerving him no way at all; and that alters the caſe mightily.

Ma. But as to the matter of coming to prayers at home, it would be the ſame thing; for if I were a Church-woman, and my miſtreſs a Diſſenter; or I a Diſſenter, and my miſtreſs of the church; a Qua-

ker, and my miſtreſs a Roman Catholic; or my miſtreſs a Quaker, and I Catholic, it would be all the ſame thing; there would be the ſame diſlike and contempt of what was done in the houſe; I ſhould no more like the croſſes and the maſſes of the Papiſts, the yea and nay of the Quakers, and reading prayers of the Church, or extempore prayers of the Preſbyterians, if I was of the other opinion, than I now like any of them, while I declare I underſtand none of them; and ſo all their family-doings would be but a jeſt to me; and I'll make a jeſt of them.

Bet. Why, this is too true, and therefore I muſt own, that if I were miſtreſs of a houſe, I would always have my ſervants go to the ſame place, to ſerve God, as I did myſelf, or I would not keep them, whether I went to the Church, or to the Meeting-houſe; to the Quakers meeting, or to the Maſs-houſe.

Ma. And what would you be the better? They would but make a jeſt of you ſtill; they would be not the more of your opinion for forcing them to go where you went.

Bet. You miſtake me much; I mean, they ſhould be ſuch as by choice went to worſhip ſo before they came to me, and that declared their opinion to be ſo when I hired them: For otherwiſe, I grant, that compelling them afterwards would be nothing at all, or perhaps worſe than the other.

Ma. And what if an honeſt plain wench like me came to be hired, that knows nothing at all of religion, and troubled not herſelf about it?

Bet. Why, ſuch a one, when I aſked her whether ſhe went to this or that place, would ſay yes to any of them, as I happened to be myſelf, and ſo I might be deceived.

Ma. Well, and what would you do then, when

you found her out, and met her on the back-ſtairs, Beſs, as my miſtreſs has done by me?

Bet. Why, I ſhould do juſt as my miſtreſs has done with you, inquire about it, and when I found you a reprobate profane wretch, and a fancy one too, as it ſeems you acknowledge you have ſhewn yourſelf to-day; I ſhould e'en give you warning to mend your manners, or provide yourſelf, as it ſeems my miſtreſs has done too.

Ma. A pretty ſtory! So I am come to make my complaint to you to a fine purpoſe; it ſeems you think me in the wrong all the way.

Bet. Indeed, ſo I do.

Ma. And what if I had come to you to be hired, and you had aſked me my opinion about religion, and I had anſwered you, that I had not had many thoughts about it; that all opinions were alike to me; that when I did go any where, I would go where you would have me go, and the like?

Bet. Why, Mary, I muſt own I ſhould not like it at all; neither, I believe, I ſhould hire you at all: I ſhould be afraid to take ſuch a ſtupid deſpiſer of God and religion into my houſe; you ſhould e'en go without a miſtreſs of me.

Ma. Well, and you might go without a ſervant too of me: for I can tell you, there are miſtreſſes enough in the world that never aſk the queſtion either before or after, nor care whether their ſervants ſerve God or the devil.

Bet. Ay, Mary, and that is one reaſon why ſo many of us ſervants are of the ſame kind.

Ma. Well, well, I don't doubt, however, but I ſhall get a place among them, and not be queſtioned about going to church: I go to ſervice to work, not to learn my catechiſm; I underſtand my cookery, what is it to them whether I underſtand religion or no?

Bet. Why, look you, Mary, I don't learn my catechiſm any more than you, and yet I do not like my miſtreſs the worſe, I aſſure you, for taking care that her ſervants ſhould go to church, and not caring to keep thoſe that are deſpiſers of religion. I think it is a pity any lady that is religious ſhould not have religious ſervants about her.

[They had another dialogue upon this ſubject afterwards; but it had too much paſſion in it to merit a place in this account, for the caſe was this: Betty gave her lady an account of ſome part of Mary's diſcourſe, particularly that of making a jeſt of her chaplain, and of calling the family to prayers; upon which her miſtreſs turned her out of her houſe, giving her a month's wages inſtead of a month's warning, as one not fit to be allowed to ſtay in her family: and Mary fell upon her fellow-ſervant for that part in a great rage. Betty told her in ſo many words, ſhe thought herſelf obliged to mention it, though it was not till her miſtreſs, having heard that they had diſcourſed together, made her promiſe to give her a full account of all that had paſſed between them, and if ſhe had not done it faithfully, her miſtreſs would have put them both away together.

Theſe two ſhort dialogues or diſputes about the maid's rambling on the Sabbath-day, was the reaſon why the young lady's aunt, was willing to diſcourſe again with her niece upon that ſubject; and accordingly meeting together ſome time after, they renewed their diſcourſe about ſervants in the following manner.

Aunt. I think, niece, when you and I talked laſt, we were upon the ſubject of taking religious ſervants: I want to hear what you have to ſay upon that head; for I think there is really much more in it than moſt people imagine.

Niece. Truly, Madam, it is what I lay a great ſtreſs upon; and though I have not had much occaſion to complain in the few years I have kept houſe, yet I have ſeen ſo much of it in my mother's time, and ſince that in other families, and a little in my own, that I am reſolved, whatever ſhift I make, I will have no ſervants, but ſuch as at leaſt have a common reverence for religion, and for religious perſons in a family. To be ſure I will never have any ſcoffers and mockers of religion, if I can help it.

Aunt. As the world goes now, child, it will be very hard to find ſuch; for religion is ſo much made a jeſt of among maſters, that it is hard to find any ſervants that do not jeſt at it too, and mock and ſlight all thoſe that have any regard to it.

Niece. That is my caſe, Madam, exactly; but there is another miſchief in it too.

Aunt. Another miſchief, child! There are innumerable family-miſchiefs in it.

Niece. I believe ſo, Madam. But this is one particular caſe, and which I have the greater reaſon to take notice of, becauſe a certain lady, an acquaintance and neighbour of mine, has had a great deal of that kind; and indeed in a particular manner with her ſervants.

Aunt. What lady is that? Pray do I know her?

Niece. You had ſome diſcourſe with her, Madam, if I remember right, the laſt time you did me the favour to dine with me.

Aunt. I remember it very well, and we talked a little upon that very ſubject; I mean, how rude and inſolent ſervants were grown at this time: But I think we had not much talk of their being irreligious and profane.

Niece. Madam, ſhe had a ſervant whom they called her *woman*; for ſhe was one to whom ſhe entruſted every thing, and who was like a houſe-

keeper, and all the ſervants were, as it were, under her: ſhe was a very good ſort of a body indeed in the houſe, and as that lady, if you remember, was very lame, ſhe could not ſtir about to look much after her ſervants herſelf, and truſted all to this woman.

She was a ſenſible woman, had the knowledge of almoſt every thing in the world, and talked admirably well, had a world of wit and humour, very mannerly and well-behav'd, ſober, and modeſt enough; in ſhort, ſhe was an excellent ſervant.

Aunt. You give her an extraordinary character, niece, I aſſure you.

Niece. In a word, Madam, ſhe had every thing about her, that could be deſired in a ſervant, but religion, and of that ſhe was as entirely empty as you can imagine it poſſible for any creature in the world to be, and that had ever heard of God or devil, or had lived among Chriſtians.

Annt. Nay, niece, you ſay ſhe was not an ignorant body.

Niece. No, indeed, Madam, ſhe was ſo far from being ignorant, that ſhe was able to deceive any body: She would talk of religious things as well, and argue upon them ſtrongly enough to delude any body: And this made it the worſe, for ſhe was ſuch a human devil, that ſhe made uſe of a fluent tongue, and of an uncommon wit, not to talk irreligiouſly only, but to mock and make a jeſt of religion in general, and of all thoſe that had any regard for it.

Aunt. She was a dangerous body indeed! Pray was ſhe a maid or a wife? for ſhe is not very young, it ſeems.

Niece. She had never been married, Madam, but I think was engaged to a man whom my ſpouſe ſent to Italy: and they are to be married when he comes back.

Aunt. You ſay ſhe is a ſober woman?

Niece. Yes, Madam, I dare ſay ſhe is. But her wicked, profane, and atheiſtical behaviour is enough to poiſon a whole family.

Aunt. But why does the lady your friend entertain ſuch a one in her houſe?

Niece. She has ſuch a ſubtilty in her conduct, and behaves ſo cunningly, that her miſtreſs does not perceive it; at leaſt, ſhe does not think her ſo bad as ſhe is.

Aunt. But what ſays her huſband to it? does he know it?

Niece. Yes, Madam, he knows more of it than ſhe does; for the men-ſervants tell him of it, and give him a particular account ſometimes of paſſages which they obſerve.

Aunt. Perhaps he don't trouble himſelf about it; for the men do not often value theſe things.

Niece. Indeed, Madam, juſt the contrary; for he is a very ſober religious gentleman, and keeps very good order in his houſe, and it is a very great diſturbance to him.

Aunt. And has he ſpoken of it to his wife?

Niece. Yes, Madam, he has very often, and told her ſuch particulars as are very eſſential to the good of the family; and ſuch too as almoſt carry their own evidence with them.

Aunt. And what does ſhe ſay?

Niece. I know not indeed how ſhe manages; but I know that her huſband and ſhe had more words about it than about all other matters put together, ſince they were married: and ſometimes it grows high, and they are very warm, and even angry about it.

Aunt. Why, ſhe ſeems to be a good ſenſible religious lady: how can ſhe take ſuch a creature's part, eſpecially againſt her huſband?

Niece. Why, firſt of all ſhe pretends that ſhe does not believe it; that the other ſervants rival her the favours ſhe receives, and her miſtreſs's particular kindneſſes and do it out of a malicious deſign: then ſhe ſays ſhe has examined her, and ſhe finds ſhe clears herſelf of much of the charge, and makes the reſt appear to be trifling, and not worth notice.

Aunt. But perhaps, niece, it really may be ſo too, and the other ſervants may make things worſe than they are, for the reaſons you mention.

Niece. But, Madam, it is otherwiſe in fact: for the truth is, this wench, or woman, manages all the ſervants ſo effectually, that, in ſhort, if any of them are religiouſly inclined when they come, ſhe makes them aſhamed to be ſo, when they come to her; for ſhe makes ſuch a mock of religion, and ſuch a jeſt of going to church, or going to prayers in the family, that ſhe laughs them out of their religion, and, in a word, they all turn reprobates like herſelf.

Aunt. But can this be, and her lady not know, or hear of it?

Niece. Yes, very well, Madam; for as I told you, ſhe is an excellent ſervant, and the more her miſtreſs is loath to part with her, the harder ſhe is to believe theſe things of her.

Aunt. But, niece, her huſband, you ſay, knows it; ſure ſhe will believe him.

Niece. But ſhe alledges, he knows it but by hearſay from the reſt of the ſervants, who, ſhe ſays, hate her, and therefore falſely accuſe her.

Aunt. And does he know nothing from his own knowledge?

Niece. Yes, Madam, he knows too much; for the unwary creature let him overhear her one evening, making her jeers, and flout at him to

ſome of the ſervants, but behind his back, for his calling them to prayers: and not only ſo, but at ſome expreſſions which he had uſed ſome time or other, which ſhe pretended were nonſenſe, and others trifling and the like, as the redundancy of her wit gave her room to banter.

Aunt. That was very unhappy indeed, and the worſe that he ſhould know it too.

Niece. So it was, Madam; for it made the poor gentleman decline performing his duty for ſome time, and made a very great breach between him and his lady, which is hardly quite made up yet.

Aunt. How ſo, pray?

Niece. Why, Madam, ſhe wanted to have him continue to go on with his duty, and to pray in his family as he uſed to do; he declared he could not do it while that creature was to be there; that it was a reſtraint to him, and he could not perform when he knew there was one in the place who made a ſcoff and jeer at him for it.

She alledged, he ought to perform his duty for all that; and that it was a piece of the devil's craft, contrived to interrupt the worſhip of God in his family, and that he ought to diſregard it entirely.

Aunt. Well, I think he was very much in the wrong in that part; for he certainly ought not to have omitted his duty upon ſo mean an objection as that.

Niece. That is true, and he owned it; but ſaid it was a difficulty upon him, a reſtraint to him in the performance of his duty, and that ſhe ought to remove it from him.

Aunt. He ought to have conſidered, that the leſs of religion was to be found in his ſervants, the more reaſon he had to pray for them, and with them; that he might perhaps be the occaſion of good to them, and of bringing them to the knowledge and

love of religion, which would be an advantage he ought to be thankful for, and think it a bleſſing to his houſe if it happened ſo.

Niece. She did argue juſt ſo to him, Madam: but he returned it ſo ſtrong upon her, that ſhe ought, as far as lay in her, to remove every difficulty that lay in the way of his duty, that it was much more as forcible to her; for he told her that, if ſhe granted that the difficulty was a ſnare laid in his way by the devil, ſhe ought, at the ſame time, that ſhe told him it was his duty to reſiſt it; do all ſhe could poſſible, or that lay in her power, to remove the occaſion; otherwiſe ſhe made herſelf acceſſary to the temptation, and aſſiſtant to the devil, in laying a ſnare for her huſband, and much of the ſin would lie at her door.

Aunt. There was a great deal in that, I confeſs; and I think ſhe ought to have yielded immediately. Pray, what did ſhe ſay to it?

Niece. She inſiſted, that the charge was falſe; that her woman denied it, and, as I ſaid before, that it was a malicious deſign of the other ſervants; but, in ſhort, the buſineſs was, that ſhe was very loath to part with her woman, who, as I ſaid before, was a very good ſervant, and uſeful to her divers ways.

Aunt. But you ſaid, that he heard ſomething of it himſelf. Surely ſhe would believe him then.

Niece. Why, ſhe could ſay nothing to that indeed; but ſhe put it off as well as ſhe could, with telling him ſhe would tell her woman of it, and take care ſhe ſhould do ſo no more.

Aunt. That ſeemed to be trifling, becauſe it was in a matter of ſuch conſequence, as ought not to be trifled with.

Niece. It was ſo: but he went yet farther; he entreated her, he begged of her to take away a thing

ſo irkſome from him, and which was ſo much a hindrance to his duty: he told her, that had a ſervant been a mere ignorant untaught creature, he could have had no difficulty upon him, but rather it would be an encouragement to do his duty, in hopes of being an inſtrument of opening their eyes; but for a mocker at religion, and one that not only deſpiſed religion itſelf, but mocked at others for it; this made the caſe differ exceedingly, and he knew not how to get over it.

Aunt. And would not ſuch arguments as thoſe move her?

Niece. Truly, not ſo much as they ſhould have done.

Aunt. And pray, what was the conſequence of it?

Niece. Truly, Madam, the conſequences were bad many ways. For, firſt, it kept the lady and her huſband in very ill terms with one another for near two years: And, ſecondly, that unhappy creature bantered all the other ſervants of the family out of the little religion they had, and indeed made them all like herſelf.

Annt. And where did it end?

Niece. Why, Madam, beſides this it broke and put an end to all good order, and to the worſhip of God in the family; I mean, to all family-worſhip.

Aunt. What dreadful work was that? What, and does it continue ſo ſtill?

Niece. No, Madam. Her huſband, who is a very religious gentleman, could not content himſelf with living in that manner with his family; and not being able to prevail with his wife to part with her woman, he took ſo much upon him as to force her out of the houſe, that is to ſay, he put away the whole ſet of ſervants in the family, for they were all made alike at laſt, and took all new people at once.

Aunt. And how did the lady take it?

Niece. Truly, Madam, I cannot ſay ſhe took it ſo well as I wiſh, for her ſake, ſhe had: for though her huſband and ſhe are very religious, ſober, and good people, yet I cannot but ſay, it has broken very much in upon their tempers and affection one to another, and there is not all the harmony between them that there uſed to be.

Aunt. And all along of one graceleſs irreligious ſervant.

Niece. It is very true, Madam.

Aunt. Beſides, as you ſay, ruining the morals of the reſt of the ſervants.

Niece. Yes, Madam.

Aunt. Pray how did that appear among them?

Niece. Why, Madam, in the firſt place, ſhe made all religious things her jeſt; turned all that was ſaid to them at church, or in the family, that had any thing ſerious in it, into banter and ridicule, and laughed them out of every thing that looked like religion. She repreſented religion to be a mere piece of ſtate-policy and prieſtcraft, contrived between the clergy and the ſtateſmen, only to ſubject the world to their management. The miniſters and ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt ſet apart for the altar, and whoſe buſineſs it is to preach ſalvation to a loſt world, by a glorious but crucified Redeemer, ſhe deſpiſed with the loweſt or laſt degree of contempt, calling them mercenaries and tradeſmen, the church their idol, and the pulpit their ſhop, where they ſold what they called the word of God to who bid moſt; and ſuch like horried and blaſphemous ſtuff. When the honeſt ſervants would have gone to church with their maſter and miſtreſs, ſhe would carry them away into the fields, or to make ſome viſit or other, and continually turn them off from what was religious to ſomething of levity and diverſion, as a more

ſuitable work for the Sabbath-day; and ſtill when ſhe had brought them to break in upon conſcience, and to profane the Sabbath-day, ſhe would fall foul of religion for laying the burden of rules upon the liberties of the world: and all ſhe did or ſaid was with a great deal of wit, and by way of ſarcaſm, as ſharp and as clean as if ſhe had been a philoſopher, or a doctor of theology.

Aunt. She was the more dangerous.

Niece. She was ſo indeed, for ſhe had a tongue of a Siren; it was neatly hung, but helliſhly employed; for ſhe delighted in making every body as bad as herſelf.

Aunt. Your ſtory is ſo very good, let me tell you another.

Niece. I ſhould be glad to hear it, Madam. But if you pleaſe to put it off till by-and-by; for I ſee your [She whiſpers her maid.] ſervant waits to ſpeak with you.

Aunt. She does ſo indeed; it is to call us to dinner. Well, we will talk again of this part; for I am very much of your opinion, niece, about taking no profane irreligious ſervants, if we can help it.

DIALOGUE II.

IN the evening, the lady and her niece taking a walk in the garden, had a farther converſation upon the ſame ſubject; and the niece ſaid to her aunt, which began the dialogue, Madam, when we left off our diſcourſe in the morning, you were pleaſed to ſay, at the end of my ſtory of an irreligious profane wench, that my neighbour Mrs ——— had been troubled with, that you would tell me a ſtory of another.

Aunt. I did ſo, child: It is of a family that lived at [She points to a houſe that could be ſeen over the garden-wall.] that houſe juſt over the way, in the back lane. The people are diſſenters; the gentlewoman is a very ſober, religious, good ſort of a perſon indeed; and her huſband is a very grave religious man alſo. They endeavour to take ſervants of their own perſuaſion as much as they can; but that is ſometimes very difficult to do; and ſhe has indeed had very bad luck that way. However, this gentlewoman, as ſhe told me herſelf, having occaſion to hire a maid-ſervant, I forgot whether ſhe was cook or chambermaid, or what elſe, for they kept three or four: but after ſhe had agreed in every thing elſe, ſhe aſked her maid (that was to be) what religion ſhe was of?

Madam, ſays the maid bluſhing, (for ſhe looked mighty ſober,) that is a queſtion I do not underſtand very well.

Why, ſays the miſtreſs, I hope you are a Proteſtant? I do not mean, whether you are a Papiſt or no.

Yes, Madam, ſays the maid, I think I am a Proteſtant.

Nay, ſays the miſtreſs, do you think ſo? but then, I doubt, you do not think much about it.

Not ſo much as I ſhould do, Madam, ſays the maid; and looked very ſimply and innocently at the diſcourſe.

Niece. Not expecting, it may be, to be aſked ſuch queſtions.

Aunt. No, I believe not; for they are queſtions that I think none of us aſk ſo much as we ſhould do, when we hire ſervants.

Niece. Servants value themſelves ſo much now, that they would take it as out of the way to be aſked about theſe things.

Aunt. Well, if I have any ſervants, they ſhall all be aſked ſuch queſtions, and anſwer them too, or they ſhall be no ſervants to me.

Niece. I am of the ſame mind, Madam, if I can poſſibly find ſervants that will ſubmit to it.

Aunt. Child, if they will not ſubmit, before they are hired, to tell me what religion they are of, what are they like to ſubmit to, after they are hired, about religion or any thing elſe?

Niece. Why, really, Madam, I have had two or three that made a great deal of difficulty to do it, and thought it very much out of the way to have me aſk them about it.

Aunt. And did you take them after that?

Niece. Why truly, yes, I did take two of them.

Aunt. And were they good for any thing when you had them?

Niece. Indeed they were good for very little, I muſt confeſs.

Aunt. It may be poſſible indeed, that a wench may be a good ſervant, that is not a good Chriſtian; but I muſt acknowledge it is but very ſeldom that it proves ſo; but when a good ſervant is a good Chriſtian too, ſuch a one is ten times the more valuable for a ſervant, as well as for her religion.

Niece. It is true, Madam: But what ſhall we ſay, that ſome that are good Chriſtians, are nevertheleſs not good ſervants; nay, there is a kind of a ſcandal upon thoſe we call religious ſervants, that they are generally ſaucy, reſerved, and value themſelves too upon it, always making conditions with you, and claiming times and liberties on account of religious affairs, which are neither proper for the work of religion, and perhaps not employed ſo, when granted.

Aunt. That brings me back to the ſtory I was telling you, at leaſt to one part of it.

Niece. I am ſorry I interrupted it then. Pray, Madam, go on with it.

Aunt. I told you, the gentlewoman my neighbour aſked the wench about her religion, and how modeſtly ſhe anſwered. However, her miſtreſs put an end to that kind of diſcourſe, and ſaid, Look ye, ſweet-heart, I ſhall not catechiſe you too far; the queſtion is, whether you have been bred to the church, or to the meeting-houſe? for I tell you beforehand, we are all Diſſenters, and go to the meeting.

Niece. That was too open, ſhe might have firſt heard what the maid ſaid of herſelf.

Aunt. No, no; ſhe was willing to let her know firſt, and ſee what anſwer ſhe would give to it, not doubting, but that if ſhe gave an anſwer not founded upon principle, ſhe ſhould find it out.

Niece. Well, Madam, perhaps ſhe would be any thing to get a good place.

Aunt. As to that, ſhe made herſelf judge of it from her anſwer, which was very honeſt indeed, though not to her miſtreſs's ſatisfaction at all.

Niece. Why, Madam, if it was honeſt, why ſhould it not ſatisfy her miſtreſs?

Aunt. 'Twas an anſwer which diſcovered the unhappy conſequences of divided families, and ſhows much of the neceſſity of what we have had ſo many dialogues about, in the caſe of yourſelf and your ſiſters.

Niece. What, about huſbands and wives being of the ſame opinion, Madam?

Aunt. Yes: ſhe told her miſtreſs, that her father went to the meetings, and her mother went to the church.

Niece. What was that to the queſtion, of what religion or opinion ſhe was?

Aunt. Yes, my dear, ſhe aſked her what ſhe was bred to, and it was a proper anſwer.

Niece. That's true; and ſo, between both, I ſuppoſe ſhe was bred to be indifferent to either.

Aunt. No, my dear, 'twas worſe than that; and her miſtreſs took it immediately; for ſhe turn'd quick upon the wench; and ſo, ſweet-heart, ſays ſhe, I ſuppoſe you were bred between them, and go neither to one nor t'other.

Yes, Madam, ſays the maid, ſometimes I went to one, and ſometimes to t'other.

And ſometimes to neither, ſays the miſtreſs.

My father and mother were poor people, Madam, ſays ſhe.

Poor people! ſays the miſtreſs, what then, child? They might have carried you to ſerve God with them, one where or other; their poverty did not hinder that.

That's true, Madam, ſays the maid; but they could not agree about it.

Niece. So, in ſhort, the poor girl was left between them without any government or inſtruction; I ſuppoſe that muſt be the caſe: A ſad example of a family, where the huſband goes one way, and the wife another.

Aunt. Ay, ſo it was: However, ſhe anſwered upon the whole, that ſhe was very willing to go to the meeting, ſince her miſtreſs deſired it.

Niece. That was to ſay, ſhe was perfectly indifferent in the matter, and it would have been the ſame thing to her, if her miſtreſs had been a Church-woman, or a Roman Catholic, or a Jew, or any thing, or nothing.

Aunt. But her miſtreſs did not take it ſo; but ſeem'd ſatisfied, that ſhe agreed to go to the meeting, and ſo took her into the houſe.

Niece. And pray, Madam, what came of it? how did ſhe prove?

Aunt. Why, juſt as a poor uneducated, ignorant creature would prove. She went with them to the meeting, but pretended to the ſervants ſhe did not like it, and ſhe had rather go to church. So her miſtreſs, taking an opportunity of talking with her again one day, told her what ſhe had heard in the houſe of her, and aſked her, if ſhe had ſaid, that ſhe did not like going to the meetings, but had rather go to church? and ſhe ſaid, that indeed ſhe did ſay ſo, but ſhe meant nothing of harm.

Well, ſays her miſtreſs, I never deſire to offer violence to any ſervant's conſcience; if you had rather go to church, you ſhall go to church, though you know what you ſaid to me, when I hired you, that you were very willing to go to the meeting.

That was very true, ſhe ſaid, and ſhe had not ſaid otherwiſe now; but ſhe ſaid only, that ſhe had rather go to the church: however, if ſhe pleaſed, ſhe would ſtay at home.

No, no, ſays the miſtreſs, I'll have no ſtaying at home; I will have all my ſervants go to the public worſhip of God ſomewhere; ſtaying at home may be as much miſpending the Sabbath-day, as going abroad for pleaſure: therefore go to church, Betty, ſays her miſtreſs, by all means; I am not ſo much againſt going to church, as to think that they do not ſerve and worſhip God there. By all means, if you do not care to go to the meeting, go to church; 'tis certainly your duty to go ſomewhere, and mine to oblige you to it.

Niece. That was ſpoken like a woman of very good principles.

Aunt. She is a very good ſort of a perſon, I aſſure you, and generally governs herſelf upon good principles, principles of juſtice and charity, which is a great part of religion.

Niece. Well, pray what followed?

Aunt. Why, ſhe went to church, as ſhe ſaid; but in a little while her miſtreſs began to ſuſpect her; and once or twice ſhe betrayed herſelf, and diſcovered among the ſervants that ſhe had been rambling about, but had not been at church at all. Upon this ſuſpicion, her miſtreſs told her one day very calmly, that ſhe had ſome reaſon to ſuſpect, that her ſaying ſhe had rather go to church than to the meeting, was not a ſincere diſlike of one, or approving of one more than of the other, but really a project of her own to have the liberty of ſpending the Sabbath-day no-where; that is to ſay, in running about, as ſhe had been ſuffered to do, when ſhe was at home with her father and mother.

She reply'd with ſome confidence, that indeed it was not ſo, and began to be more poſitive about her having been at church than her miſtreſs deſired ſhe ſhould be, becauſe ſhe knew ſhe told her what was falſe. However, ſhe run on, told her miſtreſs a lie or two, which ſhe knew to be ſo; and inſiſted that ſhe deſired to go to church, becauſe ſhe liked to ſerve God in that way better than the other: So her miſtreſs let it paſs for that time, and ſhe went to church as uſual, that is to ſay, went where ſhe pleaſed for ſome time.

At laſt ſhe was trapped accidentally, and could not get off any manner of way: for going rambling for her pleaſure, with ſome of the neighbouring ſervants, men and maids together, (for by this time ſhe had got a gang like herſelf,) and going to croſs the road about a mile from the town, a young citizen that was ſpending the Sabbath-day on horſeback, as ſhe was ſpending it on foot, I mean in pleaſure, coming juſt up at that minute, his horſe ſtarted at ſomething, I know not at what, and giving a ſpring forward, run againſt the poor wench, beat her

down, and threw him off a little farther, and hurt him too very much.

Niece. And what became of the poor girl?

Aunt. Why, ſhe was more frighted than any thing elſe; but ſhe had a kick or bruiſe by the horſe on her knee, or the horſe trod on her knee, ſhe could not tell which: but by that means ſhe was lamed, and could not get home till about eight o' clock at night, when her miſtreſs coming to the knowledge of it, ſent the coach for her, and brought her home.

Niece. Then there was a full diſcovery indeed.

Aunt. Ay, ſo there was; for the neighbour's ſervants that were with her, owned where they had been, and with whom; and told honeſtly, that they had been at a cake-houſe to be merry.

Niece. It was no crime perhaps in the families where they lived.

Aunt. No, none at all; or at leaſt no notice was taken of it, eſpecially ſince they were only with neighbours, and, as they called it, were in no bad company.

Niece. But what did ſhe do with her maid?

Aunt. Why, her maid was the ſame; ſhe was ſorry for a while, and pretended ſhe would never go abroad for pleaſure again on a ſabbath-day: but that held but a little while; ſhe was the ſame again a little while after; ſo her miſtreſs reſolved to part with her, for ſhe two or three times enticed the other ſervants to go abroad with her, and ſtill when they had been miſſed, the anſwer was, they went to church with Betty; and then if Betty was aſked, ſhe would lie very readily too, and ſay yes. At laſt this came out too, and Betty was called to an account for it; and when ſhe could deny it no longer, then ſhe would own it, and promiſed to alter it, and do ſo no more. At length her miſtreſs, who was in

a little ſtrait ſtill, and loath to put any force upon the wench about going to the meeting, told her, ſhe could not bear theſe things, and gave her warning.

Niece. It was time to part with her, when ſhe found ſhe ſpoiled the reſt of the ſervants.

Aunt. Well, but the wench, very loath to leave a good place, came to her miſtreſs, and begged her to let her ſtay, and ſhe would go to the meeting, and then ſhe ſhould be ſure ſhe did not ramble any more on the ſabbath-day.

Niece. So that 'twas plain ſhe would ſerve God any way for a good place; and that was what I ſaid of her as ſoon as I heard her firſt anſwer.

Aunt. But her miſtreſs acted upon another principle ſtill, and ſhe refuſed her: No, ſays ſhe, Betty, you declared in the houſe that you uſed to go to church; that you did not like the meetings, and that you had rather go to church. Now, I will not have any body forced from going to church to pleaſe me: if you had been one that was bred to go to the meeting, I had been better pleaſed, becauſe I have been ſo brought up myſelf; but if you chuſe to go to church, becauſe you like to ſerve God after that manner, better than in the way I go, God forbid I ſhould put any force upon you. I doubt not but you may ſerve and worſhip God very acceptably either way; but if you go to the meeting, which you do not like, 'tis only to keep your place which you do like, 'tis plain to me you will worſhip God no where; for you cannot be ſaid to worſhip God in a way you do not like.

Niece. She was too nice, I think, and talked to an ignorant wench in language that ſhe did not underſtand; ſhe might have e'en have let her gone any where: for 'twas plain ſhe would ſerve God no where.

Aunt. Well, ſhe acted on her principles, however.

Niece. But what did ſhe do with the maid then?

Aunt. Why, ſhe made her a new propoſal. Look ye, Betty, ſays her miſtreſs, if you will go to church honeſtly, and ſatisfy me that you do ſo, and that you do not, under a pretence of going to church, go abroad and ſpend your time idly, I ſhall be eaſy; for this was all the reaſon why at firſt I aſked you where you went, and told you I expected you ſhould go with me; not that I am againſt any body's going to the church, but becauſe I deſire they ſhould ſerve God, and not ramble abroad. Betty promiſed heartily; Ay, but, ſays her miſtreſs, how ſhall I be ſatisfied of the performance? Betty ſtood hard to have her word to be taken for it; but that would not do, becauſe ſhe had broke her promiſe before, and had told ſome lies too about the other ſervants going to church with her, as above. Well, Betty, ſays her miſtreſs, I'll put you in a way to ſatisfy me effectually; you know the clerk of the pariſh lives juſt by, and in your way to the church; his wife is a very ſober good woman, and I know never fails of going to church, if ſhe be well. Now, if you will go every Sunday with her, I'll anſwer for it, that if you are not there ſhe will be true to me, and ſo kind to you, as to tell me of it; and this ſhall ſatisfy me.

Niece. If the clerk's wife was ſo faithful to be truſted, it was right; but that was a doubtful thing; for ſhe would be loath, I reckon, to ruin the poor wench for failing now and then.

Aunt. Well, the ſhort of the ſtory was this; Betty was Betty ſtill; an ill habit and want of principle led her away: ſhe ſeldom came to church, and the clerk's wife would lie for her, and ſo at laſt her miſtreſs turned her away: and thus I think all ſervants, men and maids, ſhould be ſerved, would the ma-

ſters and miſtreſſes do their duty: and if this was univerſally practiſed, ſervants would ſerve God and their miſtreſſes too, better than they do.

Niece. They would ſo indeed, and, for want of it, they ſerve neither God nor their miſtreſſes. 'Tis a want of a religious regard to the well-ordering of ſervants that makes them as they are.

Aunt. Well, but I have another ſtory to tell you, of the ſame gentlewoman: for after this ſhe took a ſervant that ſhe thought muſt neceſſarily be religious, for ſhe was bred to the meetings from her infancy: but it ſeems ſhe was not of the ſame ſort as her miſtreſs; but ſhe told her where ſhe uſed to go, and capitulated for liberty to go to the ſame meeting ſtill. This her miſtreſs readily conſented to, not doubting, but that one, that was under ſuch obligations, would certainly be careful to do her duty: and when ſhe mentioned to the maid that ſhe was very ready to yield to her going where ſhe ſaid ſhe went, that ſhe only deſired to be ſatisfied that her ſervants did really go where they ſaid they went; the maid ſeemed a little ſurprized that ſhe ſhould be thought capable of ſo wicked a thing as that, and ſo ſtopped her miſtreſs's mouth with her character.

Niece. Well, Madam, then I hope ſhe had one to her mind.

Aunt. At the ſame time her huſband had a ſervant who was a very religious devout fellow, and he was a churchman: he truly conditioned, that he would be at liberty to go to church, which, upon their being ſatisfied that he was really a well-meaning, ſober, and ſerious fellow, they eaſily conſented to.

Niece. I thought you ſaid they inſiſted on their ſervants going to worſhip God where they did.

Aunt. I told you they deſired it, but that it was chiefly that they might be ſure to have orderly ſer-

vants; and that they did obſerve the Lord's day, and worſhipped God in ſome place or other, not miſ-ſpending the Sabbath; otherwiſe they were perſons of a large charity, and of a true Chriſtian temper to thoſe from whom they differed.

Niece. Well, but to return to their ſervants, how did they prove?

Aunt. Only the worſt that ever were heard of.

Niece. What! both of them?

Aunt. Ay, ay, both of them. The wench was ſaucy, rigid, cenſorious; took upon her to find fault, that her maſter and miſtreſs, who were chearful and good-tempered people, were not ſerious enough; ſhe would not come into their family-worſhip, becauſe, ſhe ſaid, 'tis ſorrily performed, and ſhe did not like it: when her miſtreſs entertained any friends, ſhe did not like it, 'twas wicked, and it was looſe and extravagant, and had too much luxury in it, and the like.

Niece. She ſhould have been miſtreſs, and not maid.

Aunt. Her miſtreſs told her ſo indeed one day, when overhearing ſome of her talk by accident, ſhe called her to her, and ſpeaking ſomething angrily to her, Jane, ſays ſhe, anſwer me one queſtion: What did I hire you for? Jane was a little ſurpriſed at firſt, not underſtanding the queſtion, and ſaid nothing, till her miſtreſs repeated the queſtion by way of explanation thus, Jane, pray did I hire you to do my work and to be my ſervant?

Yes, Madam, ſays Jane.

Well then, ſays her miſtreſs, pray do your buſineſs, and behave like a ſervant, as becomes you, or remove and provide yourſelf; and when I want a ſchoolmiſtreſs to teach me how to behave in my family, I'll ſend for you.

Niece. That was right; that was acting like a miſtreſs; pray, what ſaid Jane to it?

Aunt. She was confounded, and ſtruck dumb at firſt; but her miſtreſs explained it to her afterwards.

Niece. But pray, what was ſhe for a ſervant?

Aunt O! a moſt extraordinary accompliſhed ſlattern, and a ſurly, heavy, unmannerly creature, that looked always as if ſhe thought herſelf fitter to be a miſtreſs than her that was ſo; did every thing with reluctance, aukward and diſreſpectful, and yet wilful, and above being taught, dull to the laſt degree, but ſcorned reproof.

Niece. Certainly ſhe had more of the pretence to religion than of the reality; for Chriſtianity teaches us to fill up every relative duty with equal exactneſs, and with a ſuitable diligence and application.

Aunt. Why, to bring my ſtory to a point, ſhe had the outſide of religion only: Whether ſhe took it up with a deſign to deceive, or whether ſhe deceived herſelf, and fell from what ſhe at firſt profeſſed, I know not; but ſhe fell quite off from religion itſelf at laſt; and adding to that ſome follies, which I chuſe to ſay nothing of, my good neighbour turned her off, and got rid of her.

Niece. There ſhe was cheated in her own way.

Aunt. She was ſo, and I told her of it; but ſhe anſwered me with a ſaying which I have often made uſe of before, and that with relation to myſelf; I am never, ſaid ſhe. in ſo much danger to be cheated, as when people pretend to be religious; for then I think they dare not do ſuch things as I am afraid of.

[Here the ſecond ſiſter came into the room, and finding what diſcourſe they were engaged in, after her reſpects paid to her aunt, and to her ſiſter, ſhe

deſired they would go on with their diſcourſe, for that ſhe knew the ſubject, and it was what ſhe came on purpoſe to have a ſhare in.]

Aunt. I was telling your ſiſter, how a lady of my acquaintance was cheated with two religious ſervants.

2 *Niece.* I heard the laſt part; and ſhe was a nice one indeed.

Aunt. O! I have not told you one half of her behaviour.——

2 *Niece.* Well, but Madam, how did it fare with the man ſervant? how did he behave?

Aunt. Why, every jot as ill another way: when he ſhould be at hand to be called, and when his maſter wanted him on any occaſion, he was gone to church to prayers; and when prayers were done, he would often fall in, as he came home, at a certain ale houſe that unhappily ſtood in the way home, and I think, once or twice came home drunk.

2 *Niece.* Fine things indeed for a conſcientious wretch! Theſe were religious ſervants it ſeems.

Aunt. Hold, niece! Religion, no, nor any profeſſion or opinion in religion, is not altered one way or other, by the miſtakes or miſcarriages of thoſe that make a profeſſion of it. The eleven bleſſed apoſtles were not at all the worſe, or is the memory of them to be the leſs reverenced, for the twelfth being a devil; nor muſt we expect that all our ſervants ſhall be ſaints, when they are what we call religious. All people have failings; religion does not always change natural tempers.

2 *Niece.* But we ſhould expect they ſhould be Chriſtians, and ſervants too. Religion never takes away good manners, or privileges ſervants from obſerving the due ſpace which nature has put between the perſon to be ſerved, and the perſon ſerving.

1 *Niece.* The great thing I inſiſt upon taking religious ſervants for, is, that they may be examples in a family, of ſobriety, quiet ſubmiſſion, diligence and ſerioufneſs, to their fellow-ſervants; that they may be encouragers, not hinderers of God's worſhip in the houſe; that the whole family may chearfully unite in ſerving God, and in all religious rules and orders; that if an ignorant and untaught creature is taken into the houſe, they may be inſtructed and led by the hand into the proper duties of a Chriſtian; that all the houſe may be a claſs of Chriſtians, doing their duty in their reſpective places, both from a principle of juſtice and of charity.

Aunt. But 'tis very rare, niece, to find what you ſpeak of.

1 *Niece.* It is ſo, Madam: But then, ſince it is not probable we ſhould always find ſuch, all that I inſiſt on in the mean time is, that we ſhould take care, as near as poſſible, to take thoſe that are well inclined, and well educated: not enemies to religion, not ſuch as make a mock of worſhipping their Maker, or obſerving his rules; ſuch I would not entertain at all, on any account whatſoever; they would be a continual offence in a ſober family.

2 *Niece.* But there are ſome that may be in the middle way, no enemies to religion, not mockers at all ſober things, and yet not much ſtored with ſerious thoughts, not void of principle, nor void of modeſty.

Aunt. Why, it is true, there are ſome ſuch, and I know not what to ſay to ſuch, I would rather have them than the other.

1 *Niece.* I like thoſe but a little better, I would have neither of them, if I could help it.

Aunt. It is true, that they always diſcover a coldneſs and backwardneſs to every good thing, and ſecretly deſpiſe the moſt ſerious things, as well as the

other: But good manners reſtrain them a little from inſulting the family. I do not like ſuch, I confeſs.

2 *Niece.* But they may be better borne with, Madam, than the firſt ſort.

Aunt. Well, but your ſiſter here is ſo far from approving that ſort, that even, if they were ſeriouſly religious, ſhe would not entertain them, if they were of a different opinion; ſhe is of the ſame notion with my cook-maid, that I told you the ſtory of, that all differing opinions in religion, will, in ſuch creatures as theſe, deſpiſe and contemn thoſe that differ from them, and either hate or make a jeſt of one another.

2 *Niece.* My ſiſter, it may be, is grown rigid that way, from the diſaſter of her family, with reſpect to her huſband and herſelf: But in carrying it ſo far, then, ſhe will make it almoſt impoſſible to have any ſervants at all, but ſuch as we bring up ourſelves.

1 *Niece.* It is no matter for that, I am poſitive in it, with reſpect to a family's peace, and the harmony of religious worſhip in any family, it is all deſtroyed and loſt by theſe little difficulties: As long as there are ſervants to be had, and I could pay wages, I would change five hundred ſervants, till I found one to my purpoſe; nor ſhould any fitneſs for my buſineſs, or any goodneſs of humour in a ſervant, prevail with me to keep her, if ſhe wanted the main article of religion, and the ſame opinion of religion too with my own.

Aunt. I am afraid, child, you would change five hundred indeed then, before you would be fitted.

1 *Niece.* Why, Madam, I hope, I am not of ſuch ſtrange principles and opinions, that nobody can be found of thoſe opinions but me.

Aunt. No, my dear; but ſervants have rarely any notions of thoſe things, or enter far into them.

1 *Niece.* Well, Madam, I would venture it; for I would no more entertain thoſe who differed from my opinion in religion, than I would entertain thoſe that had none at all; for the difference in opinion in ſervants, has more miſchief in it ſometimes, than the other.

Aunt. I grant it would be very well to have ſervants of the ſame opinion in religion with ourſelves; but it cannot be always ſo; the firſt and the main point that I have made my rule, has been, to have ſervants that are religiouſly inclined in general, and that are willing to be inſtructed; theſe, having a modeſt ſober behaviour in the main, are more eaſily brought to comply with religious things in the family, whether they are the ſame way that they were firſt inclined to, or not; ſuch as theſe are often brought, by good examples in the houſe, to be of the ſame opinion with ourſelves.

2 *Niece.* Such are indeed a great tie upon maſters and miſtreſſes of families to take care that we recommend the profeſſion we make of religion by a good example; for ſervants are not likely to turn to our opinion, or embrace with us the part which we take in religion, when they ſee us not practiſing the things we pretend to teach, and not winning them to our opinion by a converſation becoming religion.

Aunt. It is very true, niece; and would maſters and miſtreſſes keep upon their minds a ſenſe of what influence their conduct may have upon their ſervants; how they may be the means of bringing them to a ſerious embracing of religion, or to a greater levity and indifference, than it may be they had before, as they ſee a good or ill example in thoſe they ſerve, we ſhould have much better maſters and miſtreſſes than we have, and more religious ſervants too.

1 *Niece.* That's very trne, and it were to be wiſhed it were well obſerved. But ſince it is not al-

ways ſo, I cannot reconcile it to common reaſoning, that we ſhould take ſervants of any principles or opinion of religion, but ſuch as we profeſs ourſelves.

Aunt. If it can be avoided.

1 *Niece*. Certainly it may be avoided, if we will.

2 *Niece*. You would except ſuch as, being ignorant and untaught, profeſs themſelves willing to come into religious families, that they may be guided into good things by teaching and example.

1 *Niece*. Yes, I do except ſuch: For ſuch are to be moulded this way or that, as Providence caſts them into religious or irreligious families.

Aunt. We agree in that part exactly; and indeed, were I to chuſe, I would rather take a ſervant, who being ignorant in religious matters, was yet ſober and willing to be inſtructed; I ſay, much rather than take one fixed in his or her religious opinion, and that opinion differing from my own.

1 *Niece*. Indeed, Madam, I am poſitive in that point; I cannot go from it: I would not take one that differed from me in opinion in religion by any means: no, upon no account at all; it is attended with nothing but confuſion in the family: I would almoſt as ſoon take a looſe profane wench, that owned no religion at all: I have ſeen ſo much of it, and found ſuch inconveniencies in having religious quarrels and differences in the family by it, that I think 'tis inſufferable. I told you the ſtory of our poor Negro, that would turn Chriſtian: We had one ſervant a Papiſt, and he would have the boy a Roman Catholic; another would have him be a church of England Proteſtant, and another would have had him been a Preſbyterian: 'Twas a reproach even to the name of Chriſtian, to hear how one told him he would be damn'd if he was this; another told him he would be damn'd if he was that; and the other told him he would be damn'd if he was either of

them, and ſo of the reſt; ſo that the poor boy was almoſt diſtracted among them, as I told you at large before.

Aunt. Without entering into examples, I grant 'tis very pernicious, and a great obſtruction to family-religion, and that many ways.

2 *Niece.* Were there a ſpirit of peace and charity always to be found, where there was an outward appearance of religion, it would be quite otherwiſe; but that is not our caſe, in this age. You ſee, Madam, what was the caſe in your neighbour's family, where the religious ſervants, I mean appearingly religious, were the worſt ſervants, and the worſt Chriſtians, they could have met with.

Aunt. I did not bring thoſe examples to leſſen the value of good, ſerious, religious ſervants; but to hint to you the danger there is (among thoſe that call themſelves ſuch) to find hypocrites, and alſo to note, that religion does not always make a good ſervant.

2 *Niece.* It ought to do ſo; and would do ſo, if the rules of Chriſtianity were faithfully obſerved.

Aunt. But it is not always ſo, and therefore, as I ſay I would not take a ſervant that was not religious or religiouſly inclined; ſo I do not ſay, that I would not, for the ſake of their being ſerious and religiouſly inclined, take a bad ſervant; for religion does not always qualify a ſervant.

2 *Niece.* No, Madam, religion does not make them good-humoured, cleanly, active, diligent, and mannerly, and the like; it will make them faithful and honeſt, that is inſeparable; but there is many a good Chriſtian that makes a bad ſervant.

Aunt. But I know ſome of them expect we ſhould bear with all the reſt, for what they call religious.

1 *Niece.* And perhaps are not ſo at bottom neither.

Aunt. Nay, that ſort of them are generally otherwiſe, and put on an appearance of religion only to diſguiſe themſelves the more dextrouſly, and theſe are the religious ſervants that I am apteſt to be deceived by; but there are ſome of the other too.

2 *Niece.* 'Tis one of the worſt parts of a hypocrite, I think, when they ſtudy to cover a vitious life with the maſk of religion.

Aunt. But I think too, that it is ſooneſt diſcovered.

2 *Niece.* It may indeed be ſooner diſcovered than other diſguiſes, becauſe the levity is apt to break out at proper intervals, in ſpite of the utmoſt caution: But the miſchief is often done firſt, when the diſcovery is too late to prevent it; and therefore, upon the whole, there is a great riſk in taking ſervants, that we are not very well aſſured of, one way or other.

1 *Niece.* But I hope you do not argue for being indifferent in the caſe.

2 *Niece.* No, no, very far from it; but I own, 'tis a critical caſe.

1 *Niece.* Let it be as critical as it will, 'tis abſolutely neceſſary to be taken care of, if we will have religious ſervants. 'Tis a ſad thing to have the maſter and miſtreſs praying in one part of the houſe, and the men and maids ſwearing or railing, laughing or jeering, in another part of it. Next to having the maſter and miſtreſs religious, it is eſſential to a religious family, to have the ſervants religious too.

2 *Niece.* If it be poſſible to find ſuch.

1 *Niece.* They muſt be found religious, or be made ſo.

2 *Niece.* 'Tis but coarſe work to new-mould a ſervant: as you find them, you have them generally. Moſt of the ſervants of this age are incapable enough to be meddled with; I mean as to inſtruction.

Aunt. I cannot ſay ſo: I am thankful that I can ſay, that I have had a looſe, wicked, irreligious ſervant or two, who, by taking ſome pains with them, have been brought to be very ſerious and very religious.

2 *Niece.* Then they have thanked God for your bettering them by your inſtruction.

Aunt. So they have, I aſſure you, niece.

1 *Niece.* But they were originally of a docible tractable temper then, which is very rare among ſervants. But, Madam, allow you could take that taſk upon you, and your application had ſucceſs, you would not expect that every miſtreſs like you, ſhould ſet up for an inſtructor of their ſervants.

Aunt. No, no; but it is not ſo hopeleſs a thing, however, as you may imagine: For if a girl has any modeſty, ſhe cannot but liſten a little to the inſtruction of thoſe that wiſh her ſo well, and that have ſo little obligation upon them to do it.

1 *Niece.* Why, Madam, an untaught wench, that is modeſt and willing to be inſtructed, I take, as I ſaid before, to be among the number that are fit to be taken: The very example of a religious family will make her religious alſo.

Aunt. My dear, you touch us all there, and that upon a nice point too; it muſt be confeſſed that it is becauſe there are ſo few religious families, that there are ſo few religious ſervants.

1 *Niece.* That is true, Madam; but, on the other hand, looſe, profane, irreligious ſervants are a great hindrance to the ſetting up a religious family. Thoſe I am utterly againſt.

Aunt. And that is the reaſon, child, that I ſay they ſhould not be taken into our families.

1 *Nicce.* And ſhould be turned out again as ſoon as diſcovered, and that without any certificate

given them of their good behaviour, or without giving them what we call a good character.

Aunt. We cannot deny them a certificate, child, when they have not wronged or robbed us; the law requires that of us.

1 *Niece.* But then, Madam, the certificate ſhould mention that I diſmiſs ſuch a man, or ſuch a maid, for being a profane, irreligious perſon, or for breaking the Sabbath-day, or for not going to church, when ordered to go there, or for going abroad to be merry, when they ſhould have been at church, and ſuch like, as the caſe may happen to be.

Aunt. I own there is a great deal of reaſon to do ſo; but we are apt to think it hard to do ſo, and that it is taking a poor ſervant's livelihood from them.

1 *Niece.* But we ſhould conſider, too, how much harder it is to puſh a profligate wretch into a ſober family, under the recommendation of a falſe character. We cannot ſay we do juſtice to our neighbour, or to do as we would be done by: For ſtill I go back to what we both ſaid before, that irreligious ſervants are a great hindrance to maſters and miſtreſſes in ſetting up religious rules and exerciſes in their families.

Aunt. Ay, and a great diſcouragement in carrying them on, when they are ſet up, and, for both theſe reaſons, I would adviſe all my friends to take no ſervants that had not ſome ſenſe of religion upon them.

2 *Niece.* I join heartily with my ſiſter in her opinion, if ſuch ſervants can be had; but what then muſt be done when we get irreligious and profane creatures into our houſes, and cannot help it; or find them ſo when we expected the contrary?

Aunt. No! my dear! The caſe is plain; we muſt not let ſervants laugh us out of our religion:

We muſt go on in the way of our duty, and ſet up the worſhip of God in the houſe; and as often as we find the ſervants flout at it, or contemn it, return the contempt upon themſelves, and turn them out, but go on to perform the duty: Turn them all away, that pretend to behave irreverently, or pretend to mock or ſcoff at it; I ſay, turn them all away, and let it be the ſtanding known rule in the family, that all the ſervants that come, may hear of it as ſoon as they converſe in the houſe; then they will know what they have to truſt to, and will behave accordingly. 'Tis omitting our duty in our families, not our performing it, that makes ſervants mock. When they ſee us religious to-day, and wicked to-morrow, they may well ſcoff; but where ſerious religion is ſteadily maintained in a family, it commands that awe and reverence of ſervants, that they grow religious of courſe. Thus one good family breeds good ſervants for another, and the good examples of a ſober family make the ſervants all ſober.

2 *Niece.* I acknowledge all that: but I have not practiſed that part indeed, of turning them away for their irreligious profane carriage when diſcovered. I have endeavoured to get religious ſervants; but when I have found them otherwiſe, I have not turned them off, which indeed I ſhould have done.

Aunt. So far you are wrong, my dear; for why not put away a coachman, or chambermaid as well for being wicked as idle, for being an offender againſt Heaven, as well as for being an offender againſt ourſelves? I think the reaſoning is every way as good.

2 *Niece.* It may hold in many caſes.

Aunt. Indeed, niece, I think it will hold in all caſes; and I can give you ſome inſtances, where ſervants knowing it before, have behaved much the

better on that account. But 'tis late now, we will talk of that part another time.

DIALOGUE III.

A FEW days after this lady and her two nieces had diſcourſed this point about ſervants, the aunt and both her nieces, that is to ſay, the eldeſt of the ſiſters and the widow, had another dialogue upon the ſubject of giving a character to ſervants, and the juſtice that was to be done in it on one ſide and on the other, on the following occaſion.

The eldeſt ſiſter had taken a very ſcoundrel idle jade of a ſervant, and that too after having received a very good character of her from a gentlewoman with whom ſhe had lived before; and ſhe complained heavily of the injuſtice of it, and that ſhe had been abuſed by the ſaid gentlewoman, and was telling her tale to her aunt, which introduced the following dialogue.

Aunt. I find, child, you lay all the fault of your being diſappointed upon the wench's former miſtreſs; you don't ſeem to ſay the maid herſelf has deceived you.

1 *Niece.* Indeed, Madam, I am deceived both ways; but I blame the maid's former miſtreſs moſt.

Aunt. Why ſo? Did not the maid pretend to be otherwiſe than you find her?

1 *Niece.* Yes, Madam, that is true; but I did not expect ſo much from a maid, when ſhe came to be hired: I did not expect ſhe would tell me her own faults.

Aunt. Well, but on the other hand, you did not expect ſhe ſhould tell you ſhe was able to do what ſhe did not underſtand, or ſhould undertake what ſhe was no wiſe qualified to perform.

1 *Niece.* No, that's true, Madam: but ſhe was willing to get into a good place,

Aunt. And to do it, ſhe muſt be allowed to introduce herſelf by a parcel of lies and ſhams, and pretend to be what ſhe has no pretence to; I think that as bad as any of the reſt.

2 *Niece.* I join with my aunt in that part. I think the law ſhould have provided ſome puniſhment for ſervants, that give themſelves characters they do not deſerve, as well as for other pieces of diſhoneſty; for, in ſhort, it is a downright fraud, a cheat, and a piece of diſhoneſty intolerable. For example, a cook comes and hires herſelf to me, to ſerve as ſuch; and when ſhe has undertaken the buſineſs, it appears ſhe underſtands nothing of cookery, and has never been any thing but a middle maid, to waſh and ſcrub the rooms, and the like; or a chambermaid offers herſelf, and tells me, ſhe knows how to make mantuas, cut hair, clear ſtarch, and the like; and when it comes to the trial, acknowledges ſhe does not underſtand any of them, or only this, and not that, as it happens: Why ſhould not this maid be puniſhed, as well as ſhe that, pretending to be honeſt, proves a thief?

Aunt. No, child; ſhe does deſerve to be ill uſed: But the caſe differs as to a thief; for ſhe is puniſhed not for pretending honeſty, and deceiving me in the character, but for her actual theft, and robbing me of my goods.

2 *Niece.* Well, Madam, then the puniſhment ſhould differ too. I do not ſay ſhe ſhould be hanged, but I think ſhe ſhould be puniſhed however ſome way or other.

1 *Niece.* We have ways to puniſh ſuch a ſervant; and all ſervants too, if all miſtreſſes would be but juſt to themſelves, and to one another. We might make up the deficiency of the law in that caſe to ourſelves very eaſily, and the want of doing ourſelves juſtice is the thing I complain of.

Aunt. How would you make it up?

1 *Niece.* Why, Madam, whenever any ſuch ſervant came to me, I would be ſure to turn her away again, with all the reſentment her behaviour required; and when ſhe ſent any future miſtreſs to me for a character, I would do her juſtice.

2 *Niece.* You ſhould ſay, ſiſter, that you would do the gentlewoman juſtice, who came to enquire of you about her.

Aunt. Why, truly, you put it right there, niece.

2 *Niece.* Indeed, Madam, that is the foundation of all the grievances we are under about ſervants, that we make no conſcience of doing one another juſtice, when we make inquiries after the character of another's ſervants.

1 *Niece.* Why, we are loath to hinder poor ſervants; for to take away their characters, is to take away their bread.

2 *Niece.* We may ſay the ſame of a thief, or a houſe-breaker, when we find them in our houſes or gardens, and take them even in the very fact: we are loath to ruin them for it; that it was neceſſity forced them to do what they did; and if we have them committed, they will be hanged or tranſported: nay, the argument is ſtronger, becauſe the injury done may have been trifling, and the puniſhment there is loſs of life, which we may be loath to be concerned in.

1 *Niece.* You carry the caſe a great deal too high, ſiſter; I cannot think they are alike.

2 *Niece.* Truly, ſiſter, I think 'tis much the ſame; but of the two here is the greater obligation.

Aunt. I believe I take your notion right, niece; the obligation is this: If I take the thief, and give him up to the law, he is undone, and his life muſt pay for it; and 'tis a ſad thing for me to let a poor fellow be put to death, or tranſported, for robbing

me of a trifle: But, on the other hand, I am to conſider, 1. I am obliged by the law to do it; that it is not I that put him to death, but the laws of his country, and his own crime is the cauſe of it; and I am an offender againſt that very law, and in ſome ſenſe a confederate with him, at leaſt an encourager of him in his crime, if I omit it; But, which is more than that, 2. By my perhaps unſeaſonable, and indeed unjuſt compaſſion, I become acceſſory to all the robberies he ſhall be guilty of after it; becauſe if I had done as the law directed me, I had put him out of a condition to rob or injure any other perſon.

2 *Niece.* You have fully explained my meaning, Madam, and I take the caſe to be the ſame; I by no means do as I ought, or as the law directs, if when my neighbour taking a ſervant after me, and coming to me for a character of her, I decline ſpeaking the truth of her, ay, and the whole truth too.

1 *Niece.* Then no ſervant would get a place, as ſervants are now.

Aunt. Then, niece, they would be more humble, and careful how they behave.

1 *Niece.* It is a nice caſe, and we ought to take a great care then, that we do not injure them.

2 *Niece.* That's true, we ought to do them no wrong; but we do the perſon that is to take them an irreparable wrong, if we recommend an ill ſervant to them.

Aunt. Nay, we break another law that you have not thought of yet; for we do not do in it as we would be done by, which is the great Chriſtian rule.

2 *Niece.* Not only ſo, Madam, but we do as we would not be done by; for would any of us, if we go to inquire of a ſervant, be told ſhe was honeſt, when ſhe was a thief; that ſhe was neat, when ſhe

was naſty; tight, when ſhe was a ſlattern; diligent, when ſhe was idle; quiet, when ſhe was ſaucy; and modeſt, when ſhe was, it may be, a bold huſſy? and the like.

Aunt. I obſerve, indeed, there is a general backwardneſs in people whenever we go to enquire about a ſervant. A miſtreſs cannot be ſuppoſed to recommend earneſtly, becauſe it is to be granted that ſhe parted with the ſervant for ſomething or other. But ſhe is therefore, on the other hand, ſhy and backward, and will ſay nothing, or but little of the real character of the ſervant, becauſe, forſooth, ſhe would not hinder her a place; and indeed I would be very loath myſelf to ruin a poor girl, becauſe I did not like her; but I do think, as you ſay, niece, we miſtreſſes are too backward to be free with one another in ſuch caſes.

2 *Niece.* It would not only anſwer the end, Madam, as to the law-part, but it would bring ſervants back to be ſervants again, as they uſed to be, and as they ought to be; for, really, they can hardly be called ſervants now.

1 *Niece.* I wiſh it was with us in the caſe of our maids, as it is with the gentlemen in the caſe of their men-ſervants, *viz.* that we ſhould be obliged to give certificates to our maids when they went away.

2 *Niece.* Why, even then, the caſe would be the ſame; for if the form of the certificate was not ſettled too by the act of parliament, we ſhould ſign any thing they deſired us.

1 *Niece.* Nay, ſiſter, that would be our faults.

Aunt. Why, ſo it is our faults now, child, if we give them wrong characters.

1 *Niece.* I do not ſay we ſhould give wrong characters; but I ſhould be loath to ſay the utmoſt of a poor ſervant, and ſo prejudice every body againſt her: perhaps what ſhe did amiſs with me, ſhe might

mend with another, and perhaps what might not pleaſe me, another might bear with.

2 *Niece.* I will put an end to all that immediately, ſiſter: I do not mean that I ſhould enter into a long accuſation of a ſervant, and give the hiſtory of her life; or that I would blaſt her for trifles, or give her an ill-name, for not ſuiting exactly to my temper. But I ſpeak in capital eſſential articles, ſuch as denominate a wench a good or a bad ſervant; and I'll tell you a caſe, when I went to a lady myſelf to inquire about a chambermaid who had been ſent to me by another perſon.

Aunt. But what was the perſon that ſent or recommended her? did ſhe know her?

2 *Niece.* She was an honeſt well-meaning poor woman, that uſed to help me to maids when I wanted.

Aunt. But then, I ſuppoſe, did not know much of her own knowledge.

2 *Niece.* No, Madam, but the maid gave me an account where ſhe had lived laſt, and I went to the lady, and told her I came to inquire of ſuch a maid-ſervant, who, as ſhe had ſaid, had lived with her. Yes, ſhe told me, ſhe had lived with her.

Pray, how long did ſhe live with you, Madam? ſaid I.

Pray, Madam, how long does ſhe ſay ſhe lived with me? ſays ſhe.

Almoſt a year, Madam, ſays I; I think it wanted but a month or thereabouts: at which ſhe made a kind of a hum, and ſaid nothing for a while.

Now I did not like the way of anſwering my queſtion with a queſtion; for I thought ſhe might have told me poſitively how long the maid had lived with her, and left me to judge whether ſhe had ſpoken truth: whereas, by returning the queſtion upon me, ſhe kept it in her own breaſt to accuſe or excuſe her. So I turned it ſhort upon her. I hope, Madam,

ſays I, you will be ſo plain with me, as to let me know whether ſhe ſays true or not?

Yes, yes, Madam, ſays ſhe.

This ſurpriſed me again; for this had a double meaning as plain as could be, and it was impoſſible to know whether ſhe meant, yes, that it was as the maid had ſaid, or yes, that ſhe would let me know whether the maid had ſaid true or not. So I ſtopped a while to give her time to go on and explain herſelf; but finding ſhe did not, I repeated my queſtion. Pray, Madam, ſays I, be pleaſed to let me know exactly how long ſhe lived with you.

Why, Madam, ſays ſhe, not quite a year: the maid ſays true in that.

I was far from being ſatisfied with that kind of anſwer, the manner of drawing out her words ſhewing me plainly that the wench had lied. However, leſt I ſhould quarrel too ſoon, and ſo have no more out of her, I dropped it, and aſked her ſome other queſtions.

Pray, Madam, ſays I, is ſhe a good work-woman?

Yes, yes, ſays ſhe, ſhe does her work well enough.

This was all equivocation again. Any body would have underſtood by my queſtion, that I inquired if ſhe was good at her needle; but ſhe would not take it as I meant it, and put it off with an anſwer which might be very true, if the wench knew but how to make a bed, or ſweep a room; ſo I explained myſelf, and ſaid, Madam, by a good work-woman, I mean at her needle, I hope you underſtand me.

Truly, Madam, ſays ſhe, I think ſhe is well enough, I never put her to much of that kind, having other hands in the houſe.

Well, there ſhe came a little better off with me than before; but ſtill all this gave me no character of the maid; ſo I went on.

Pray, Madam, ſays I, what do you ſay to her honeſty? ſhe is honeſt, I hope?

I have no reaſon to tax her honeſty, ſays ſhe, ſhe never wrong'd me of any thing that I know of; I charge her with nothing.

Even this was but a very indifferent way of vouching for a girl's honeſty; and if ſhe was really honeſt, ſhe was not juſt to her.

Well, Madam, ſays I, may I aſk you what was the occaſion of your parting with her?

O, Madam, ſays ſhe, we parted indeed; ſhe and I could not agree; I am paſſionate and pretty troubleſome, and my maid and I could not hit it; but ſhe may do very well with another. Perhaps other miſtreſſes may not be ſo troubleſome and difficult as I am; ſhe may do very well; I aſſure you ſhe knows how to pleaſe any body but me; ſhe told me ſo herſelf.

I was indeed provoked now, and anſwered, Madam, you are pleaſed to give yourſelf ſome hard words; but I beg you will allow me to ſay, I did not come for a character of the maid's miſtreſs, but a character of the maid; and I doubt, by your diſcourſe, you are willing to recommend your maid's character at the expence of your own.

She only ſmiled at me, when I ſaid this, and ſaid again, ſhe was very difficult and ill to pleaſe; but Betty might do very well with another.

I reſſed her again to let me know what ſhe parted with her maid for: but ſtill ſhe ſhuffled me off, and gave me the cunningeſt evaſive anſwers. Betty herſelf could not have put me off with half the dexterity as her miſtreſs did; ſo I made my honours as if I was going away.

Madam, ſays I, you are exceeding tender of your maid: but I cannot ſay you are equally juſt to a ſtranger, that you ſee reſolved to depend upon your

word for the character of a ſervant. However, I ſhall take it the way I hope you intended it, namely, that though it may not be for the girl's advantage to have the particulars of her behaviour told; yet you would have me underſtand by it, that her conduct will not bear a character, and that you would not have me venture upon her; and I ſhall take your advice.

At this ſhe ſeemed concerned, as if ſhe had expected that her awkward way of talking of the w ench had ſatisfied me, and that I did not underſtand her; and as I offered to go, Pray, Madam, ſays ſhe, don't ſay ſo; Betty may make you a very good ſervant; I am ſorry you ſhould take me ſo; the maid may do very well in another place, though ſhe might not ſuit me.

As I was talking, I obſerved, that, in the drawing-room to the room we ſat in, there ſat a gentleman reading in a great book, and every now and then he looked off his book, when his wife (for it was her huſband) ſpoke, as if he was ſurpriſed at what ſhe ſaid; and as the folding-doors ſtood wide open, ſo that the rooms were as it were let both into one, he heard all we ſaid; and I perceived that as he looked off his his book when his wife ſpoke, ſo he almoſt laugh'd outright when I ſpoke.

At laſt, as if he was not able to hold any longer he clapp'd up the book pretty hard, and threw it by, and came forward into the room we were in, and making me a very low bow as he paſſed, he offered to go out; when his lady ſtept up to him, and ſaid ſomething ſoftly, which he anſwered ſoftly, and, with abundance of good-humour in his face, ſaid to his wife, My dear, I will not interrupt you; upon which I offered to go away. By no means, Madam, ſaid he, my buſineſs is of no moment. So taking hold of his wife's hand, he as it were turned her towards me, and at

going away, My dear, ſays he, don't hold the lady in ſuſpenſe about your maid, for I hear that is the buſineſs: let her have a true character of her; you would be glad to be dealt plainly with yourſelf. His wife ſmiled, but ſaid nothing at firſt; but preſently turning to him, and all in a pleaſant good humour, ſhe gave him a little tap on the arm with her hand: Do you give a character of her, if you think I han't done it well. Muſt I? ſays he: why, then, Madam, ſays he to me, with my wife's leave, ſhe is a damn'd jade, a horrid ſcold, a liar, and though ſhe has, I believe, ſtolen nothing from us, was a thief in the place ſhe came laſt from, which we heard of ſince, and for that very thing my wife turned her away.

I made him a courteſy, and told him I was greatly obliged to him for ſo much ſincerity, and found his lady had been only tender of his maid's character, but had not at all recommended her. Why, Madam, ſays he, my wife was cheated in this wench, only by the people ſhe lived with before giving her abiguous anſwers, and ſpeaking as favourably of her as they could; and that is the ruin of us all, adds he, in taking ſervants.

But, Sir, ſays I, the lady ſhe lived with before did your lady a great deal of wrong, if ſhe knew her to be what you ſay ſhe was in her ſervice.

I don't know, Madam, how it was for that: I never meddle with theſe things, ſays he, but I believe my wife was not ſo nice in her inquiries as you are; or if ſhe was, ſhe was eaſier to be cheated in their anſwers; and 'tis the ladies being thus backward to give juſt and plain accounts to one another, that is the reaſon that ſuch a wretched gang of wenches run from houſe to houſe, and get places, and behave in them as they do. Would the ladies, ſays he, be juſt to one another, ſpeak plainly and ho

neſtly, and give the creatures ſuch characters as they deſerve, they would take care to deſerve better characters, and not behave ſo inſolently, and ſo ſaucily as they do. This jade, Madam, ſays he, that you come to inquire of, has inſulted and taunted her miſtreſs two or three times, at ſuch a rate, that I have been forced to ſend a footman into the room to bring her out by the head and ſhoulders, for fear her miſtreſs ſhould be frighted; and yet ſhe is ſo good to that ſlut, that ſhe cannot find in her heart to ſpeak the truth of her.

My dear, ſays the lady, I have not ſaid any thing but truth of her.

Well, my dear, ſays ſhe again, I was not upon my oath.

Why, that is true too, child, ſaid he, but you are upon your honour, and that is equivalent to an oath; and it would be hard to have this lady left to take ſuch a devil into her houſe, merely for fear of injuring the wench; why, you would injure the family you ſuffer to take her, much more than the maid. Let her go ſeek her fortune where nobody knows her, and there ſhe may have time to mend her manners, and come to town again.

Aunt. Why, nieces, this gentleman was your inſtructor. I think 'tis juſt his language that you ſpeak; only I think you did not talk quite ſo moderately as he does.

2 *Niece.* And very good language too, Madam; 'tis for want of this gentleman's rule that we have any ſaucy, inſolent, idle ſervants in the world.

1 *Niece.* It would make ſervants more cautious of their behaviour, I confeſs: but then, ſiſter, it would put it into the power of miſtreſſes to ruin poor ſervants when they pleaſed, and even where there was no good cauſe; the bread of a ſervant would depend upon the breath of a miſtreſs.

2 *Niece.* There is no good in this world without a mixture of evil; no convenience without its inconvenience; but the damage that way, if it ſhould be ſo at any time, is infinitely leſs than the miſchief to families which comes by the inſolence and wickedneſs of ſervants.

Aunt. Nay, by the univerſal degeneracy of ſervants, you might have ſaid: for even thoſe we call good ſervants at this time, are quite different things from what they were in former times, ay, even ſince I can remember.

2 *Niece.* Well, Madam, but I could propoſe a remedy even againſt that part which my ſiſter objects againſt, of doing ſervants wrong; for I do not deny that miſtreſſes may injure their ſervants, and there ought to be no wrong on either hand.

1 *Niece.* I have known a miſtreſs refuſe to give a poor ſervant a character, only becauſe ſhe was unwilling to part with her, and yet at the ſame time uſe her ill too.

2 *Niece.* Such things may happen, I do not deny that.

1 *Niece.* I have alſo known a miſtreſs injure a ſervant by her partiality in favour of other ſervants, and give a maid an ill character when ſhe has not deſerved it, by the mere reproaches raiſed on her by others.

2 *Niece.* It is not poſſible to reckon up all the caſes in which a miſtreſs may injure a ſervant, 'tis true, and there can no rule be ſet ſo exact, as that nobody ſhall be oppreſſed: But I have two things to ſay;

1. All the injuſtice that can be ſuppoſed to happen that way, is not equal to that which miſtreſſes and families ſuffer from the inſolence and baſeneſs of ſervants; and therefore the remedy is to be embraced, and, the leſſer evil choſen.

2. There may be methods directed by the law, that in ſuch caſes, where miſtreſſes have nothing capital to charge upon a ſervant, they ſhall be obliged to give them certificates of their behaviour.

Aunt. I have often thought of that; but unleſs the form of that certificate be ſettled and adjuſted by that very act of parliament, the miſtreſſes will juſt write what they pleaſe, and when they are prejudiced againſt a ſervant, will ſay nothing in their certificates that ſhall do them any ſervice, or recommend them at all to any one elſe.

2 *Niece.* Thoſe muſt be very malicious people that will go that length with a ſervant.

1 *Niece.* But ſuch people there are, and ſuch perhaps always will be.

2 *Niece.* Well, there may be a remedy for that too, for there be two or three ſeveral forms of certificates directed by the law; one voluntier, and full to all the behaviour of a ſervant, and the other to her honeſty and ſobriety only.

Aunt. Why then, child, nobody would take a ſervant that had only your ſecond rate certificate; they would preſently ſay, her miſtreſs had given no character but what ſhe could not help.

2 *Niece.* I rather think, Madam, that all ſervants would content themſelves with what you are pleaſed to call my ſecond-rate certificate.

Aunt. Come, let us hear what kind of certificate it is, if you are lawyer enough to draw it up.

2 *Niece.* I am not lawyer enough to draw it up in form; but it ſhould be to this purpoſe, Madam.

The CERTIFICATE.

I A. B. *do hereby certify, that the bearer hereof,* M. B. *lived with me as a chambermaid one year and a quarter, ending the day of*

laſt, during which time ſhe behaved herſelf honeſtly, modeſtly, and dutifully, as became a ſervant. Witneſs my hand.

A. B.

Aunt. Why, truly, niece, a ſervant that could not deſerve ſo much character as that, nobody ought to take.

2 *Niece.* Well, Madam, and a ſervant that did deſerve ſo much character as that, no miſtreſs ought to deny.

1 *Niece.* But ſuppoſe, ſiſter, a miſtreſs would maliciouſly deny it, as I ſaid before.

2 *Niece.* Why, then the maid ſhould have the ſame remedy as ſhe has for her wages, *viz.* complain to a juſtice of peace, that in caſe upon the miſtreſs's being heard, if ſhe could not give ſufficient reaſons and proof of the fact, for which ſhe refuſed ſuch a certificate, the juſtice ſhould ſign the certificate to the maid, intimating, that having heard all that could be alledged, he did not find there was ſufficient cauſe for refuſing it.

Aunt. Well, niece, and what was your firſt-rate certificate, pray, that you call this the ſecond?

2 *Niece.* Why, Madam, when a miſtreſs may have a kindneſs for a ſervant, and is willing to give her an extraordinary recommendation, ſhe may add, that ſhe is a very good needle-woman, or that ſhe is a very good cook, that ſhe was not only faithful, but diligent, and ſo in other caſes: but, as I ſaid, I believe any ſervant will be contented with the ſecond, which is ſufficient.

1 *Niece.* I agree, that the giving ſuch certificates, would put an end to theſe enquiries.

2 *Niece.* Which oftentimes leave us in the dark, as much as we were before they are made; nay, and ſometimes more a great deal.

Aunt. That is our fault indeed, that we will not with freedom and plainneſs acquaint one another, what we are to expect from the maids we hire; and 'tis preſuming upon this charitable diſpoſition of miſtreſſes, that maids behave ſo ſaucily as they do.

2 *Niece.* Well, if any of my maids go from me, I tell them plainly before-hand what they are to expect of me, and what kind of character I ſhall give them, if they ſend any body to me.

1 *Niece.* And what effect has it upon them? Are they the better for it?

2 *Niece.* Why, I'll tell you what effect it had upon one of my maids. I had told her my mind very roundly one day, upon occaſion of ſomething I did not like; and truly my maid turned very ſhort upon me, and told me ſhe was ſorry ſhe could not pleaſe me, and hoped I would provide myſelf then. I told her, that ſhe ſhould not ſay, ſhe could not pleaſe me, but that ſhe would not pleaſe me.

She anſwered very pertly, that it was as I would, I might take it which way I pleaſed.

Very well, ſays I, Mary, you are very tart with me. I hope when you ſend your next miſtreſs to me for a character, you will expect to hear thoſe very words again.

Why, would I be ſo barbarous, ſaid ſhe, to rip up words that paſſed in anger, and give them for the character of any ſervant?

No, Mary, ſays I, you ſhould not ſay will I be ſo barbarous? you ſhould ſay, would I be ſo honeſt as to give a character of you from your own mouth? Depend upon it, Mary, ſays I, I ſhall not be ſo unjuſt to any miſtreſs to conceal a thing of that moment from them; why, it would be doing them the greateſt injury in the world.

She ſtood ſtill a good while, and ſaid nothing; but as ſhe ſaw me looking at her, as if ſhe expected

an anſwer, the girl fell a crying, run to me, and offering to kneel to me, begged my pardon, and told me, ſhe hoped I would allow her to recall her warning, for ſhe was reſolved ſhe would live with me till ſhe had deſerved a better character.

Aunt. Poor girl! I ſhould have told her ſhe might go when ſhe would then, for ſhe had deſerved a better character juſt then.

2 *Niece.* I did not ſay ſo to her, but I would not let her kneel; and I told her, I would not inſiſt upon her warning; for as long as ſhe behaved ſo to me, I believed I ſhould never put her away.

Aunt. Well, but did ſhe mend afterwards?

2 *Niece.* Indeed, ſhe was a very good ſervant before, only a little haſty, and impatient of reproof; but ſhe proved the beſt ſervant after it, that any body ever had. She is with me ſtill.

Aunt. It is certainly ſo, if we give fair, bold, and juſt characters of them, and it once came to be the cuſtom or general uſage among miſtreſſes, ſervants would quickly carry it after another manner; at leaſt they would take care to part upon as good terms as they could with their miſtreſſes.

2 *Niece.* And we ſhould not cheat one another as we do now, in giving characters to the vileſt creatures that fall in our way.

THE END.

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